ALL ABOUT HISTORY

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Real history behind his fantasy world

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Did tomb openers *really* die?

SHANGHAI'S OPIUM KING
The man who terrified China's city of sin

TUTANKHAMUN
How Egypt's legendary boy king came to power and who was really in control

REDISCOVERING BENIN'S EMPIRE
From its rise to the stolen bronzes

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PLUS FINDING RICHARD III EAST INDIA COMPANY AT WAR WHAT IF FREDERICK III HAD LIVED?

A VILLAGE IN THE THIRD REICH

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by Julia Boyd

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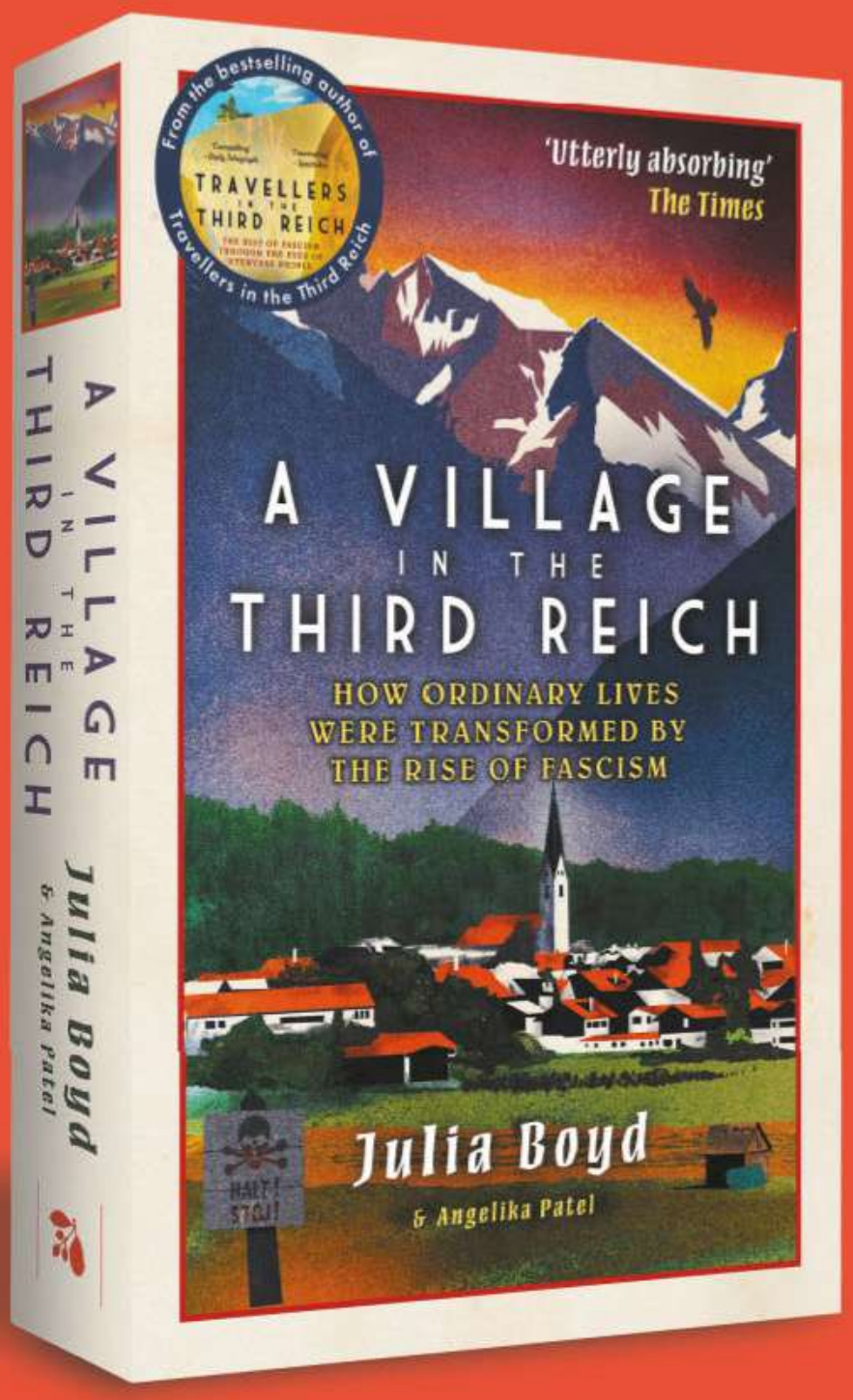
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An image of Tutankhamun in his chariot from the decoration around a chest

Welcome

I think I started the last issue by telling you about how I came to learn about the Aztecs in school, likely just after a period delving into the Ancient Egyptians. I can assure you, I'm not using my primary school history workbooks for cover topic inspiration (although that might be an idea... I'll look into that). That all being said, Egypt was one of the topics that I got really obsessed with as a child. I still have my papyrus bookmark from the British Museum in a drawer somewhere. So when I could see on the horizon the 100th anniversary of Tutankhamun's tomb being uncovered, I was very excited to take another look at the boy king.

We welcome back Garry J Shaw to guide us through the story of the young pharaoh, his role in taking Egypt back to its older traditions after the reign of his 'heretic' father and why he was nearly forgotten entirely. While we were in the neighbourhood, we thought we would also take a look at the historic mummies curses from history and how the idea captured the imagination of so many. Did a mummy's curse sink the Titanic? You'll have to read on to find out. Add a little crime in Shanghai, the history behind JRR Tolkien's Middle-earth and the extraordinary life of former slave and abolitionist Sojourner Truth and it's a packed issue, so I'll let you get reading. Enjoy.

Jonathan Gordon
Editor

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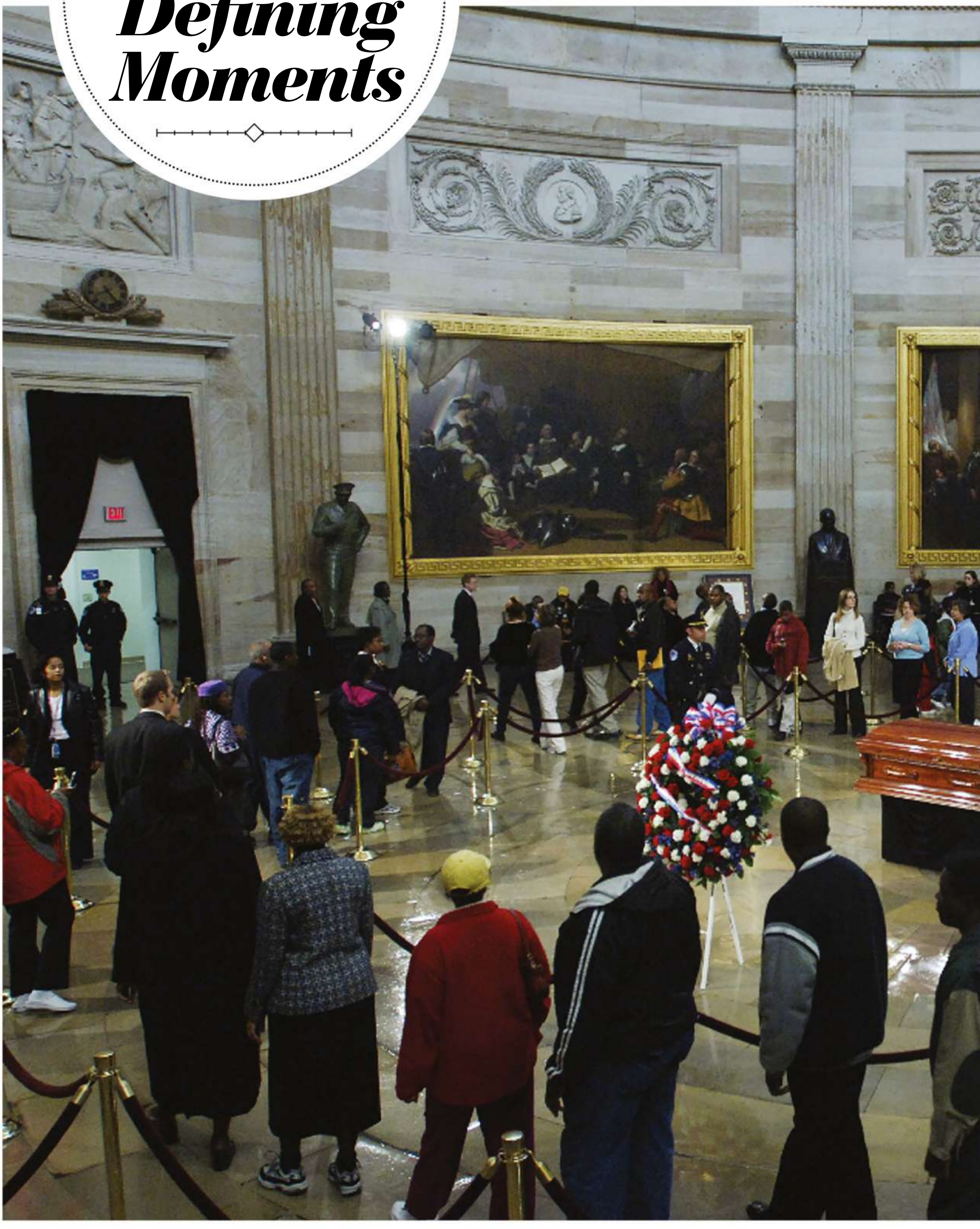
Tutankhamun

How Egypt's legendary boy king came to power and who was really in control

Defining Moments



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30-31 October 2005

ROSA PARKS' CASKET IS PLACED IN THE CAPITOL

On 24 October 2005, civil rights activist Rosa Parks died at her home in Detroit at the age of 92. Her funeral casket was taken to the Capitol Building in Washington DC on 30 October and placed in the rotunda. Thousands of people came to view her coffin. She was the first woman and first American who was not a government figure to be given this honour.

12 October 2001

KOFI ANNAN WINS THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

The seventh secretary-general of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2001 for his work bolstering the UN and his focus on the protection of human rights. He was also recognised for his work in helping to prevent the spread of HIV throughout Africa. Annan served as the UN's secretary-general from 1997 until 2006.

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Travel back to one of the most powerful and influential nations in the history of Africa and learn how it fell to colonialism

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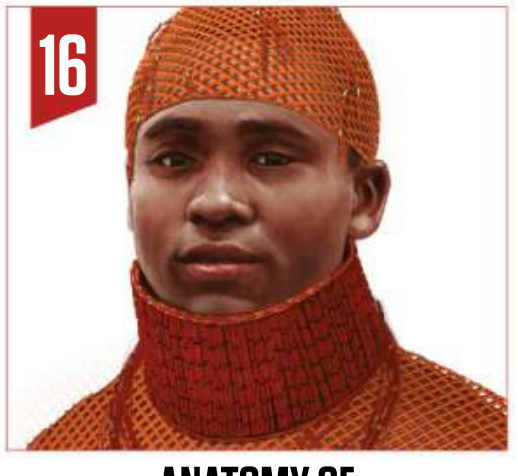
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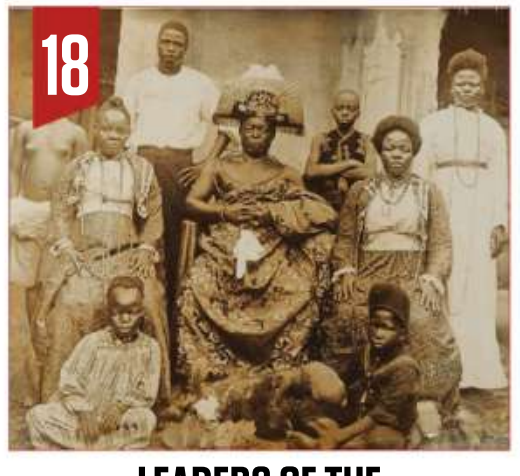
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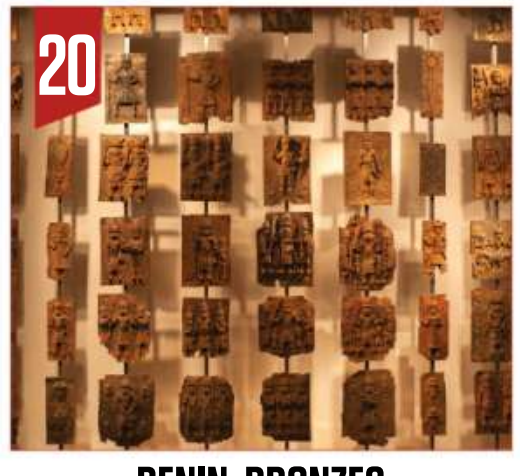
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BENIN, BRONZES AND BEYOND

Main image: © Alamy

Written by Callum McKelvie, Emily Staniforth

Key Events

c.1500 BENIN TRADES SLAVES

In the centuries following contact with the Portuguese, the Kingdom of Benin begins to use slaves in trade deals. However, in 1516 Benin bans the trade of male slaves with Portugal who were previously sent to Portuguese colonies in Africa.

The Benin slave trade was supplied using prisoners captured during wars with neighbouring states.

c.1700 SACRIFICE OF IDEN

Queen Iden sacrifices herself to the gods in order to secure the reign of her unpopular husband, Oba Ewuakpe. She is buried alive at the Oba Market and shortly after Ewuakpe's authority is restored. Peace returns to the kingdom.

THE KINGDOM IS FOUNDED c.900

The area of Igodomigodo in present-day Nigeria, West Africa, begins to expand its territories and establish its borders, creating the kingdom that will become Benin.

EWEKA BECOMES OBA c.1180

The people of Igodomigodo invite a prince of neighbouring Ile-Ife to rule. Eweka becomes the first oba and Igodomigodo becomes known as Edo (later Benin City).

EWUARE THE GREAT BECOMES OBA 1440

Prince Ogun becomes the greatest oba of Benin, Ewuare I, and uses his reign to expand the kingdom, transforming it into a far-reaching African empire.

OWODO DIES c.1100

Owodo, the ruler (or ogiso) of the growing kingdom, dies leaving Igodomigodo without a head of state. The people begin to look for a solution.

PRINCE OGUN BATTLES WITH UWAIFAIKON c.1440

According to oral histories, Prince Ogun fights his brother, Uwaifaikon, for the throne and wins. Benin City is largely destroyed in the conflict.

1485 TRADE BEGINS WITH PORTUGAL c.1485

After the arrival of the Portuguese, Benin begins trading with them. The oba tightly controls the exportation of goods from the kingdom.

1485 PORTUGUESE ARRIVE IN BENIN

João Afonso de Aveiro arrives in Benin hoping to expand Portugal's control of trade in Africa and establish a route through the kingdom to Ethiopia. He also hopes to convert the Edo people to Christianity but faces opposition.

The Portuguese were the first people to call the kingdom Benin.

1553 TRADE WITH EUROPE FLOURISHES

The first British expedition to the kingdom arrives and trade between Benin and Europe begins to grow. The primary exports from the Benin Kingdom include ivory, pepper and palm oil, which they trade with Europe for copper and brass.

1897 BENIN IS COLONISED

A British punitive expedition enters the Kingdom of Benin. Benin City is razed to the ground and treasures, including the Benin Bronzes, are looted. The kingdom becomes part of colonial Nigeria and Oba Ovonramwen is exiled from the kingdom.

The British Museum in London currently holds 900 Benin Bronzes - the largest such collection in the world.

PORTUGUESE SETTLE AT BENIN PORT 1487

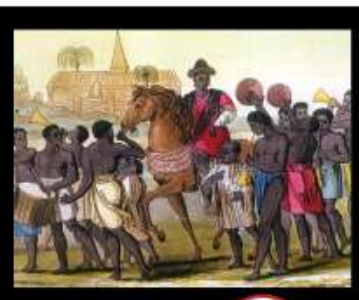
A constant base for the Portuguese is established at the port of Ughoton. The base acts as a trading post and is overseen by Aveiro.

BENIN STARTS MAKING BRONZES c.1500

The Benin Bronzes begin to be made during the 15th and 16th centuries. The bronzes come to define Benin's artistic culture and heritage.

ESIGIE BECOMES OBA c.1504

Esigie, son of Ozolua and Idia, becomes oba after defeating his brother in a civil war and defending the kingdom against the invading Igala people.



POWER OF BENIN DECLINES c.1800

After a series of civil wars from around the 17th century, the kingdom begins to decline as conflicts weaken the government and economy.

BRITISH SOLDIERS KILLED 1896

An expedition tries to establish British authority in Benin. A party of British troops, led by James Phillips, is killed by Benin soldiers.

FIRST BRONZES RETURNED TO BENIN 2022

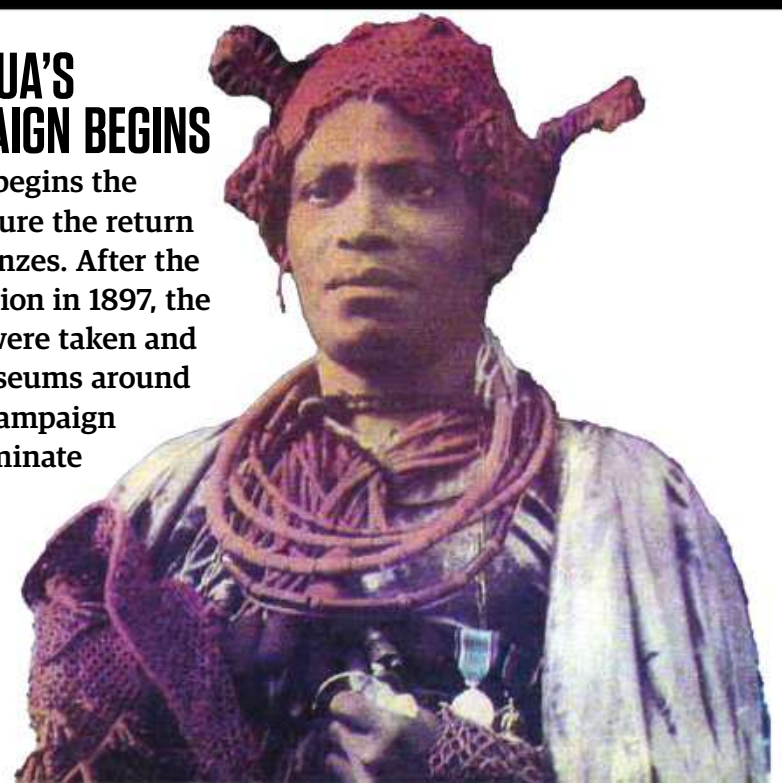
The first Benin Bronzes are returned to Nigeria since they were looted in 1897. The bronzes are received by the current oba, Ewuare II, in a ceremony.

1892 GALLWEY TREATY

Benin and Britain sign the Gallwey Treaty, named after Lieutenant Colonel Henry Gallwey, which holds the oba responsible for any practices that might obstruct British commerce in the area. It is thought the oba has little choice in the signing.

c.1933 AKENZUA'S CAMPAIGN BEGINS

Oba Akenzua II begins the campaign to ensure the return of the Benin Bronzes. After the punitive expedition in 1897, the looted bronzes were taken and displayed in museums around the world. The campaign continues to dominate headlines today.



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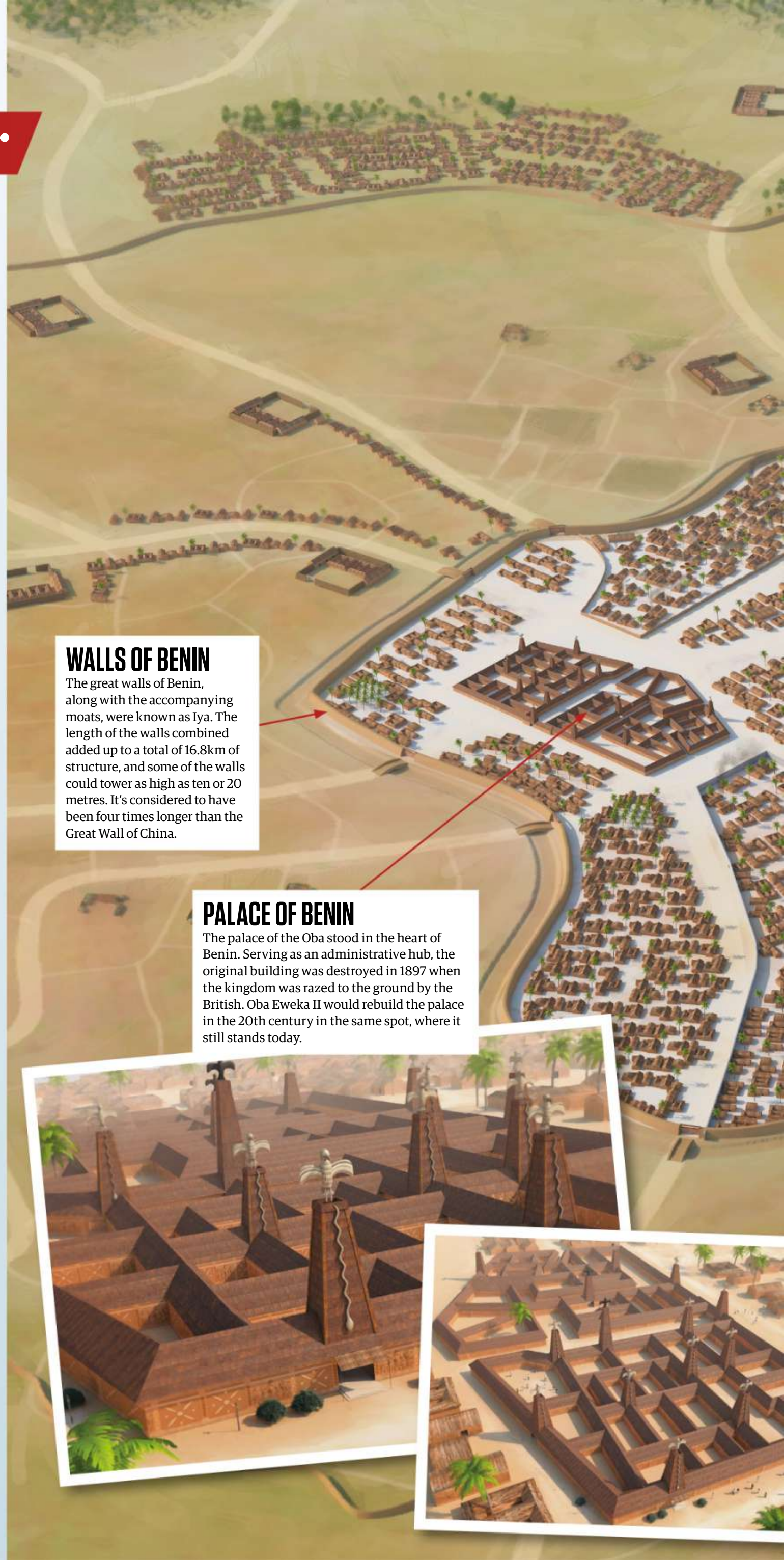
THE GREAT WALLS OF BENIN

Nigeria
c.1200 – 1897

The great walls and moats surrounding the Kingdom of Benin were once a marvel that rivalled the Great Wall of China. These impressive interconnected structures had some 500 parts and are said to have measured over 16,000km in length and enclosed around 6,500km of land. Indeed, the 1974 edition of the *Guinness Book of World Records* listed the walls as the world's largest earthworks prior to the invention of heavy machinery.

The walls and moats were first constructed during the 13th century by the ruler of Benin, Oba Oguola, and were then extended during the 15th century by Oba Ewuare. The city was known for its sophistication, like having huge lamps of burning palm oil lighting the streets, a forerunner to modern street lighting. It was said to be richly decorated with impressive brass relief sculptures and well governed with, according to one Portuguese explorer, almost no crime.

During the 17th century, the Kingdom of Benin began to enter a period of decline, and by the 19th century Britain sought to gain control over the capital due to the importance of palm oil to Britain at the time. Oba Ovonramwen was under increasing pressure to sign a document making his kingdom a protectorate. During the 1897 punitive expedition, British envoys were killed by the Benin people as the Oba suspected a plot to replace him. In retaliation, the British sent soldiers to Benin. They destroyed the great city, looting its many buildings and burning it to the ground In 1914 the Benin monarchy was revived, though this time under strict British rule. The once-renowned walls and moats were sadly obliterated in the destruction of the city, and little now remains of these once-mighty structures. As such, this illustration and text has been completed to the best of our abilities using the records that have survived since that time.


WALLS OF BENIN
The great walls of Benin, along with the accompanying moats, were known as Iya. The length of the walls combined added up to a total of 16.8km of structure, and some of the walls could tower as high as ten or 20 metres. It's considered to have been four times longer than the Great Wall of China.
PALACE OF BENIN
The palace of the Oba stood in the heart of Benin. Serving as an administrative hub, the original building was destroyed in 1897 when the kingdom was razed to the ground by the British. Oba Eweka II would rebuild the palace in the 20th century in the same spot, where it still stands today.

STREET LAMPS

Supposedly, Benin was one of the first cities to have street lamps. These vast metal lamps, which were fuelled by palm oil, illuminated the city's various alleys and streets during the night. The Portuguese explorers who came to Benin during the 15th to 17th century noted these lamps as an example of Benin's sophistication.

OIL PALM TREES

The Kingdom of Benin was well known for its rich deposits of palm oil, a natural oil that comes from the fruit of oil palm trees. A crude oil can be produced from crushing the flesh of the fruit, while the squashing of the kernel can produce an oil of the same name. The Kingdom of Benin's richness in palm oil was a key factor in British interest in the city.

STRAIGHT STREETS

Towards the end of the 17th century, Benin was visited by a group of Portuguese explorers. The captain of the vessel described Benin, noting that it "is larger than Lisbon" and that "all the streets run straight and as far as the eye can see". He went on to state that as theft was unknown, none of the residences in the capital had doors.

GATES

There were purportedly nine gates within the vast complex of walls, with a bastion (a fortified watchtower) that allowed entry to be controlled. The gatekeepers would collect 'gifts' of either money or other items from those wishing to enter the city. During the night, all nine gates would be locked and entry forbidden until morning. These gates provided a formidable defence for the great kingdom.

SMALLER MOATS

Following the construction of the first and second moats, Oba Oguola decreed that the numerous towns and villages within Benin should copy this example. These towns obeyed and constructed their own miniature moats, providing further defence should any enemy breach the city walls and attempt to invade.

FIRST AND SECOND MOAT

The first and second moats are believed to have been built c.1280-90 by Oba Oguola as a form of defence for the city. During these years the city was under attack by the Duke of Udo, Akpanigiakon. Oba Ewuare would extend these already-formidable fortifications during the 15th century.

Illustration by: Adrian Mann

Anatomy

OBA OF BENIN

Nigeria
16th-18th century

RATTLE STAFF

Rattle staff, also known as ukhurhe, were shaken to attract the attention of long dead ancestors during religious ceremonies. Near the top of the staff is a hollow chamber with a rattle inside. They would have been kept and placed on ancestral altars and used when praying, and possibly carried on occasions of state. Made out of brass or wood, some were incredibly ornate.

BRACELET

According to the Met Museum in New York, the oba of Benin, his wives and courtiers as well as other chiefs wore bracelets, usually at palace festivals. A number of examples are noted for being particularly ornate. One unique pair owned by the Met Museum is noted for being finished with gold, unusual as this was not a metal often employed for decorative purposes in Benin culture.

IYERUAN

The iyeruan was a type of formal dress worn by the nobility of Benin. A special form of white cloth, it would have been hand-woven by the Royal Guild. On top of this would be worn another separate garment of red coral beads, matching the rest of the impressive ceremonial attire.

CORAL HEADWEAR

The image here is our best possible calculation using the information available on the oba's traditional clothing. Large collars constructed out of coral beads would often be worn around the neck. The cap would sometimes have dangling strands of beads, showing the king's opulence. Similar to the Ikekeze, these would have been constructed out of red beads.

IKEKEZE

Coral beads have a unique place in Benin culture, with one particular type known as ivie only worn by the oba or chiefs. The Ikekeze is a shirt constructed like a net with every single knot having a coral bead on it. Worn mostly for state and ceremonial purposes, the resultant item was extremely heavy.

BENIN IVORY MASK

The oba of Benin, as well as members of his court, would wear ornaments on the left hip, usually during ceremonies. The pendant mask shown here is modelled on an example kept in the British Museum and was one of a number looted in 1897. It shows the image of the queen mother, Idia.

FLY WHISK

Fly whisks are objects used to swat away flies, the British Museum stating that such objects made out of horse tail were meant to show great wealth. Some oba had whisks constructed out of bearded red coral, which the Art Institute of Chicago notes would have been completely impractical due to their heavy weight.

Illustration by: Kevin McGivern

Historical Treasures

BRONZE OBA HEAD

A superb example of one of the looted Benin Bronzes Nigeria, c.18th century

The Benin Bronzes are arguably the most famous and notable historical artefacts associated with Benin culture. Created from the 16th century onwards, the term is used to refer to thousands of statues, plaques, masks, figurines and decorative ornaments, among other items. The Kingdom of Benin had a number of specialist guilds who were responsible for the now-famous sculptures.

Despite the name, some of the items are not actually made from bronze – an ivory mask, for example, is part of the collection. The Benin Bronzes are all items that were stolen by the British during the destruction of the city in 1897. The British Museum has the largest collection of bronzes, with some 900 objects, though others such as the Ethnological Museum in Berlin also have collections, theirs numbering 500.

The bronze depicted here is the head of an oba, one of the kings of Benin. This particular example is held by the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Bronze heads such as this one would have been placed on an altar in the oba's palace. Upon being crowned oba, it was the duty of the king to build an altar to the memory of his predecessor as well as have an effigy of him cast in bronze. According to the Metropolitan Museum's catalogue, the oba's head being cast in bronze was to demonstrate the role of the head in not only driving the functions of the body but, in the case of the oba, directing the entire Kingdom of Benin.

The Benin Bronzes are currently the subject of ongoing discussions between the British Museum and the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture in Nigeria. In October of 2021, following a number of public statements by senior officials, the Nigerian ministry formally called for Nigerian antiquities, including the bronzes, to be returned. According to *Art News*, the Ethnological Museum has also been criticised due to its collection of Benin Bronzes. Other museums within the UK, such as the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, also have examples of Benin Bronzes.

EXQUISITE DETAIL

According to the Metropolitan Museum, the cylindrical shape and intricate detail – such as the beaded collar and additional beads atop the crown – serve to identify this as being from relatively late in the kingdom's history, most likely the 18th century.

IVORY TUSKS

According to the Royal Collection Trust, the circular holes on the oba's crown may have been used to hold an ivory tusk. This tusk would have been marked with important achievements and events from the depicted oba's reign.

ALTAR ORNAMENT

The bronze oba head would have been commissioned by the newly crowned king to honour his predecessor. It would've been placed on an altar that would have had regular sacrificial offerings such as animal blood or food placed on it.

CORAL

The Royal Collection Trust states that it is common for busts of this type to accentuate the coral items worn by the oba. Coral was a symbol of wealth and power in the Kingdom of Benin and depictions of the oba portrayed him as covered in this luxury.

ABOVE A selection of bronze oba heads on display in the British Museum

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Hall of Fame

BENIN'S BIGGEST NAMES

Some of the influential people who helped to shape the Kingdom of Benin throughout its long history

Ozolua
unknown – c.1504

Oba Ozolua was famed for his expansion of the Benin Kingdom. After he became oba in the 1480s, he was committed to expanding the boundaries of the kingdom both the east and west. His military escapades earned him the title 'the Conqueror' and he claimed to have won over 200 battles against neighbouring states. Ozolua is also credited with being the one of the first obas to make contact with the Portuguese who were exploring Africa during this period. Trade between Benin and Portugal was welcomed by Ozolua and he even allowed Portugal to send Christian missionaries to the kingdom.

Some sources have suggested that Oba Ozolua visited Portugal at some point during his reign, although this cannot be confirmed.

Bronze bust of an oba

EWUARE I
UNKNOWN – C.1473

Ewuare the Great reigned as oba in the 15th century and is remembered as one of the most influential leaders of the kingdom. He rebuilt Benin City, fortifying it after the conflict with the previous oba, Uwaifiokun, and extended Benin's territories. He also introduced the tradition of creating bronze busts to commemorate the obas and established that the title of the oba would be hereditary, ending conflict between warring candidates to the throne.

ASORO
UNKNOWN – 1897

General Asoro was a military leader during the reign of Ovonramwen. During the British colonial expedition in 1897, Asoro fought against the British entering Benin City and is said to have told the invading forces: "No other person dare pass this road except the oba." Asoro was a formidable fighter and a brave soldier but, ultimately, he couldn't keep the British forces out. He was killed in the conflict and a statue was erected to commemorate his service to the kingdom. The statue still stands in Oba Ovonramwen Square and is believed to mark the spot of Asoro's death.

Akenzua II
1899 – 1978

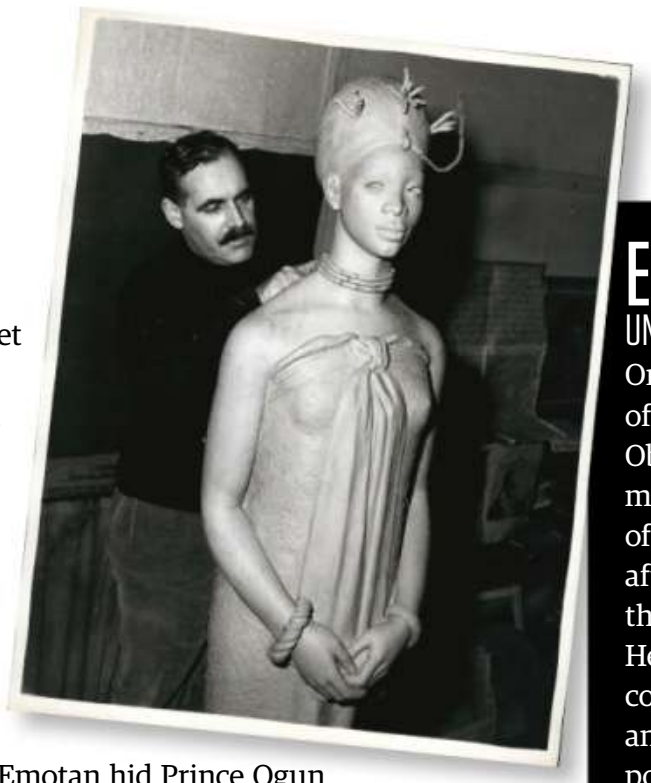
Akenzua II was oba after the British colonisation of Benin. Though Ovonramwen had been exiled, his descendants have held on to the oba title and their position as head of the Edo people. As the traditional head of state for the Benin Kingdom, Akenzua dedicated his reign to trying to secure the return of the Benin bronzes, which were stolen in 1897. He was largely unsuccessful, with only two bronzes being returned during

The movement to return the bronzes to Benin, started by Akenzua II, is still active today. Many of the bronzes remain in museums outside of Benin City.

OVONRAMWEN
C.1857 – 1914

The last oba of the Benin Kingdom before it was invaded and colonised by the British, for most of his reign Ovonramwen Nogbaisi fought to maintain Benin's independence. He tried to cut off European traders from the kingdom's natural resources, including rubber and palm oil. In 1896, a British entourage tried to gain an audience with Ovonramwen. The British men were ambushed after provoking the oba and most were killed. A punitive expedition was sent by the British in 1897 and it plundered Benin City. Ovonramwen was forced to surrender and was exiled from Benin for the rest of his life.

EMOTAN
C.1400 – UNKNOWN



Emotan was a market trader in the 15th century who helped Oba Ewuare (one of Benin's greatest leaders who was then known as Prince Ogun) claim the throne and defeat the usurper Oba Uwaifiokun.
The story goes that Emotan hid Prince Ogun in her hut and informed him of Uwaifiokun's plot to have him murdered. Ogun eventually overthrew Uwaifiokun and became oba himself. As Oba Ewuare, he planted a sacred Uruhe tree at Emotan's trading spot after her death, deifying her. A bronze statue was commissioned by Akenzua II in 1954 to commemorate the life of Emotan.

The face of Idia was memorialised in this beautiful ivory carving that has since become one of the most recognisable artefacts of the Kingdom of Benin.

Idia
unknown – c.1550

The first iyoba (queen mother) of the Kingdom of Benin, Idia was the second wife of Oba Ozolua. Her son, Esigie, had to fight for his position as the next oba and when he won he credited Idia with his victory. She was said to have provided her son with political counsel throughout his campaign, and was also believed to hold mystical powers that contributed to his success. Esigie created the position of iyoba specifically for her and she was given her own palace, the Eguae-Iyoba. Idia helped her son throughout his rule and after her death the tradition of the iyoba continued.

EWEDO
UNKNOWN – C.1280

One of the earlier leaders of the Kingdom of Benin, Oba Ewedo is credited with moving the governing centre of Benin to Benin City shortly after his accession to the throne in the 13th century. He was also the first Oba to consolidate his rule in Benin and reign with absolute power, exerting control over the various chiefs who still held authority throughout the kingdom. Ewedo's actions strengthened the power of the Oba for centuries to come.

ESIGIE
UNKNOWN – C.1550

The son of Oba Ozolua and Idia, Esigie did not become oba of Benin easily. After Ozolua's death, Benin was plunged into civil war as Esigie and his brother, Arhuaran, ruled separate areas of the kingdom. The conflict weakened Benin and the neighbouring Igala people took advantage, sending soldiers to attempt to take the north of the kingdom. Esigie, with the help of his mother, defeated both his brother and the Igala, becoming the next oba.

IDEN
UNKNOWN – C.1700

Queen Iden performed the ultimate sacrifice for her people. She was one of the wives of the unpopular Oba Ewuakpe whose people rebelled against him. Most of his wives abandoned him but Iden remained with the oba. She consulted an oracle who said a sacrifice must be made to bring peace to the kingdom. Iden offered herself and she was buried alive. Soon after, peace returned to the kingdom and Ewuakpe became an effective ruler.

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Q&A

BENIN, BRONZES AND BEYOND

Allegra Otsaye Ayida discusses the history of the West African kingdom and the return of its stolen art

Allegra Otsaye Ayida is a PhD student at Yale University, currently researching the environmental history of coastal West Africa. She is also a curatorial intern in African Art at Yale University Art Gallery.

The current head of state for the Edo people, Oba Ewuare II

What were the major events that led to the British colonisation of the Kingdom of Benin?

From the 13th century, the obas ruled the Benin Kingdom for six centuries as the central authority. During this time Benin enjoyed a marginal European presence. This situation in later centuries proved unacceptable to the British as their influence in the area was expanding. The 1880s were a transformative period for African-European relations with the onset of European imperialism. Additionally, there was a shift in the power balance with Africa becoming more dependent on Western technology and global trade. In November 1896, Acting Consul General James Phillips asked for permission from the Foreign Office to depose the oba and open up the Benin Kingdom for trade. He sent a messenger to the oba, but the oba declined this visit as he was in a customary remembrance period for his late father. Phillips decided to force an audience with the oba, but was killed on his way to Benin from the coast. This sparked the punitive expedition of February 1897 that would ransack and destroy centuries of the kingdom's history.

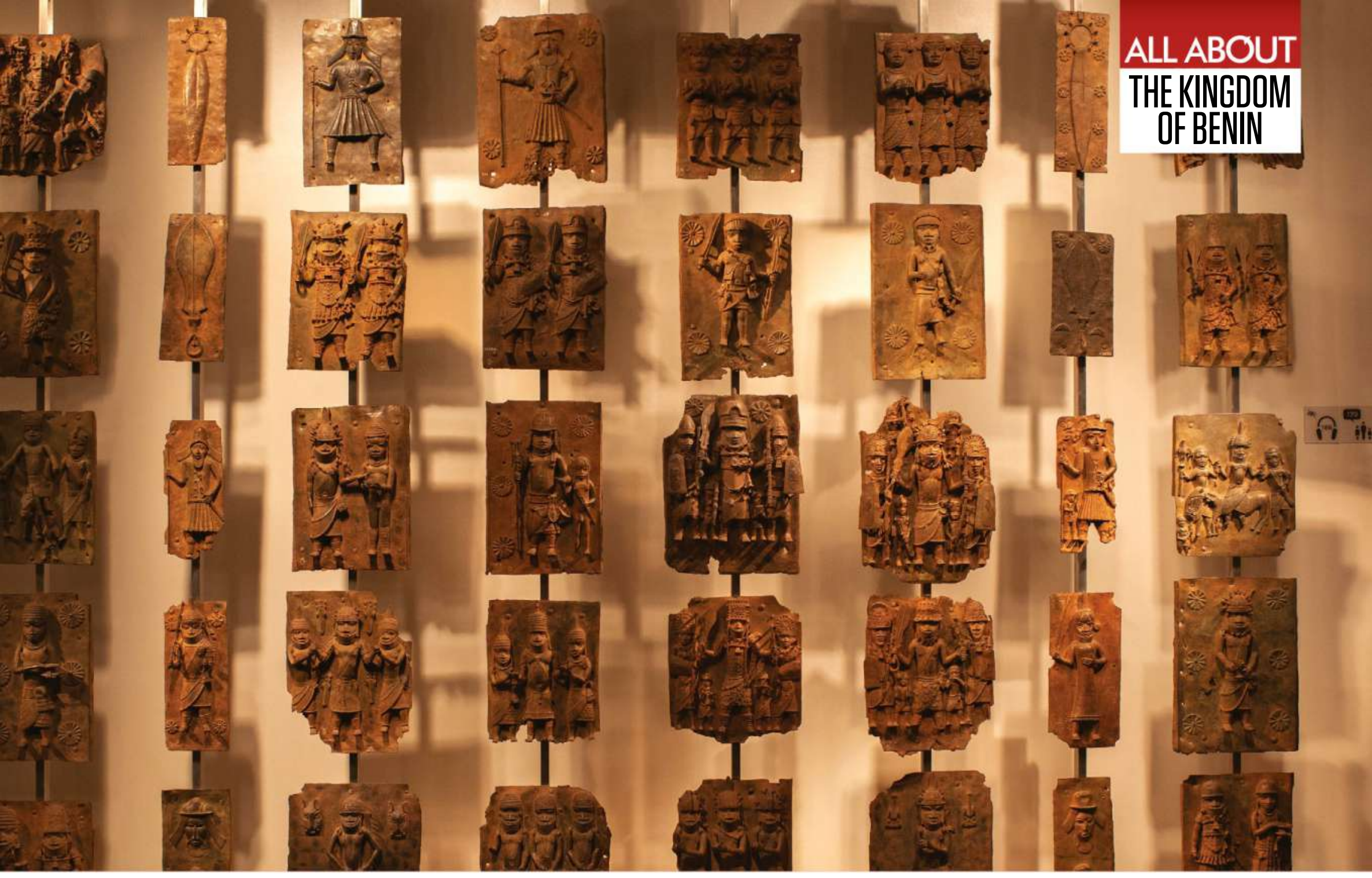
What kind of trade did Benin participate in?

The oba was the chief trader and guilds were associations of craftsmen and professionals. Guilds were granted the monopoly or patent rights by the oba in their respective trades to produce and market their products. Each guild (including ivory carvers, blacksmiths and bronze-casters) was subject to the oba. For example, the tusks of every elephant that was killed belonged to the oba by right. European traders and travellers in the 17th century noted around 40 busy trade guilds involving woodcarving, pottery-making and blacksmithing. Local trade also thrived and was mostly in the hands of Benin women. For international trade, the Benin Kingdom had been trading with Europeans as early as the 15th century when Portuguese traders first came into contact. Over several centuries many Benin goods were exchanged for European goods.

What was the role of the oba in Benin society, and how has it changed since colonisation?

The oba is the sole representative of the obas who ruled before him in a society that believes in continuity between the gods, the ancestors and the living. The obas were also warrior-kings and would frequently venture outside the palace, until the drowning of Oba Ehengbuda in a canoe accident in the 17th century. After that the oba became tied to spiritual practices and would take part in over 200 state ritual ceremonies. The oba is the custodian of the customs and traditions of the Edo people. They are

Photo courtesy of: Allegra Ayida



ABOVE Benin Bronzes on display at the British Museum in London

the central figure, both ideologically and geographically, with the palace being at the geographical centre of the Edo-speaking world. Following the sacking of the Benin Kingdom, Oba Ovonramwen was exiled to Calabar, where he died in 1914. This was the same year the British administration amalgamated the Northern and Southern Protectorates of Nigeria to form Nigeria as it exists today. The monarchy has modernised since the colonial period: Oba Akenzua II had a Western education and was influenced to restructure some of the palace institutions in Benin. The current oba, the 40th of the ancient throne which practises primogeniture, is His Majesty Akpolokpolo Ewuare II, a graduate of the University of Wales, with an MBA from Rutgers University in the USA. He, like others before him, demanded the return of the Benin Bronzes as soon as he ascended the throne in 2016.

What are the Benin Bronzes?

These are thousands of royal artworks of significant historical importance to the Edo people which were looted by British naval officers and colonial administrators during the punitive expedition in 1897 and sold off to pay for the cost of the expeditions. They are now scattered across the globe in more than 160 museums and an unknown number of private collections. Benin art is primarily made of carved ivory and cast brass and they are important as both the spiritual and cultural heritage of the palace, where many pieces were used at the shrine altars.

What do the bronzes tell us about the cultural and political landscape of the Kingdom of Benin?

Benin art describes the politics, history and divine kingship that marks a kingdom that has existed for over 600 years. In the precolonial period there were long galleries that hung bronze plaques. The famous plaques located in the British Museum in London are a historical record of the encounters between the Europeans and the Benin Kingdom. These plaques have depictions of both ceremonial activities and past battles and exploits. Many royal artworks that had been in the inner palace sanctum of ancestral altars were rarely seen by outsiders before they were looted.

Why do you think the Benin Bronzes are of such fascination to the rest of the world?

The Benin Bronzes and other looted cultural heritage have been getting mainstream attention in the last few years. For decades, many African countries have fought for the repatriation of art that was stolen during the colonial period. The Benin Bronzes in particular first caught the popular imagination of British society back in the 1890s. There was a perception that during the imperial period Africa was a 'dark' continent without technical sophistication or artistic expression. This denial of civilisation was dispelled when the looted artworks were seen in Europe and beyond. The exquisite craftsmanship of these sculptures is universally acknowledged by those who view them in museums. Despite the destructive events of 1897, Benin art still thrives today with the guilds casting bronzes for tourism.

For Africans, and in particular the Edo people, it is more than the aesthetics. These works represent their history, indigenous religion and culture. The call for restitution grows louder and, as momentum builds, more museums are reconsidering their ownership of these looted items. The dialogue on the return of these collections is being transformed and has sparked the interest in the Benin Bronzes globally.

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Places to Explore

VIEWING THE BENIN BRONZES

The museums across the world where the magnificent artefacts are on display

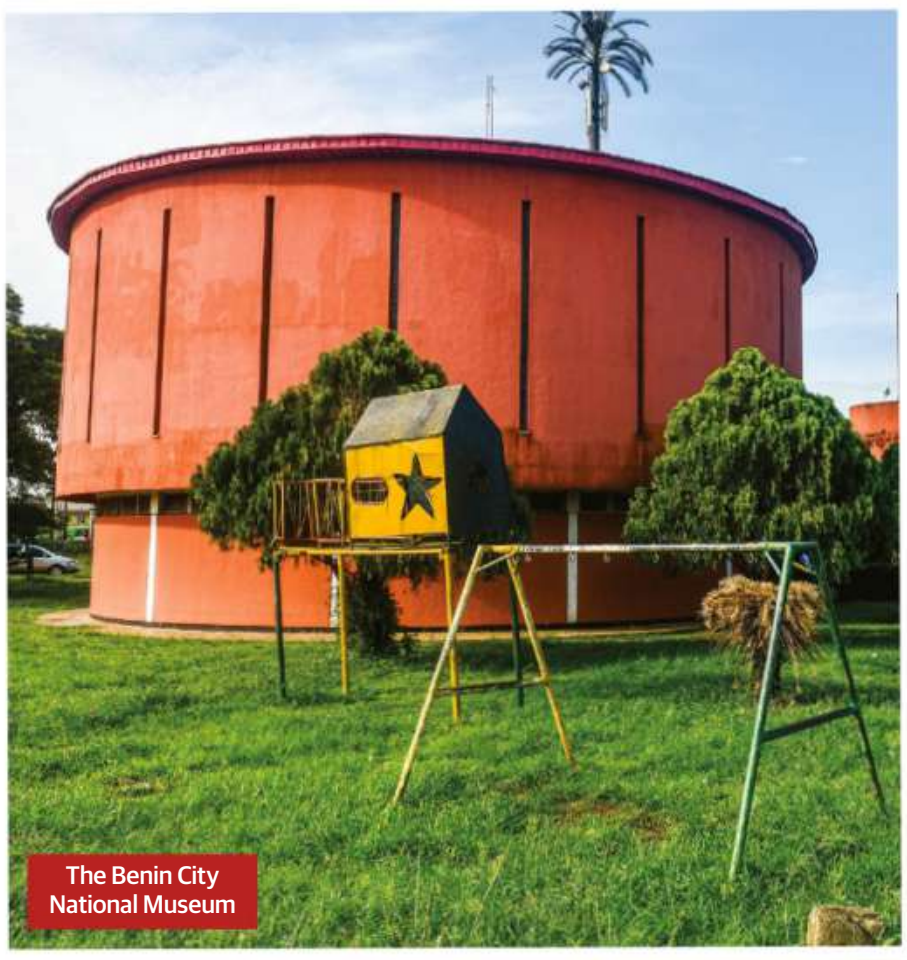
1 BENIN CITY NATIONAL MUSEUM

BENIN CITY, NIGERIA

Located in King's Square, the Benin City National Museum was founded during the reign of Oba Akenzua II (r.1933-78). It has had several homes over the years, but the current museum building was commissioned in the 1970s and was constructed in the grounds of the traditional palace complex. Displayed over three floors, the museum's extensive collection features artwork from all over Nigeria as well as more recent objects of interest from the Benin region. The first exhibition displayed at the museum featured objects and artwork from Benin's royal palace.

While many of Benin's artefacts were looted by the British forces during the 1897 punitive expedition, some bronze figures and other artefacts that date to before 1897 can still be seen in the Benin City museum on the ground floor, including a bronze casting of the head of Queen Idia, the first iyoba (queen mother). The museum also displays numerous terracotta and cast iron pieces.

The Benin City National Museum is currently working to get some of the stolen Benin Bronzes repatriated to the region.



The Benin City National Museum

2 PITT RIVERS MUSEUM

OXFORD, UK

The Pitt Rivers Museum has over 500,000 artefacts

The Pitt Rivers Museum brings together archaeological and anthropological collections from all over the world. Founded in 1884 with a collection of around 22,000 objects, donated by the British anthropologist Augustus Pitt Rivers, the museum is part of the University of Oxford. The museum's collections have since grown, and now consist of over 500,000 objects. With objects displayed in large cases, the Pitt Rivers Museum is different from most museums in that artefacts are grouped together by purpose rather than by time period or location of origin. The Benin Bronzes held by the museum are brass and ivory pieces that were made to honour the oba. The Pitt Rivers' website acknowledges the violent history of how the Benin pieces ended up in British hands, and states that they are in conversation with the Royal Court of Benin who wish for the pieces to remain on display while discussions continue about the future of the artefacts.

The museum is open on Monday from 12pm-5pm, and on Tuesday-Sunday from 10am-5pm.

The British Museum in London

Bronzes on display at the British Museum

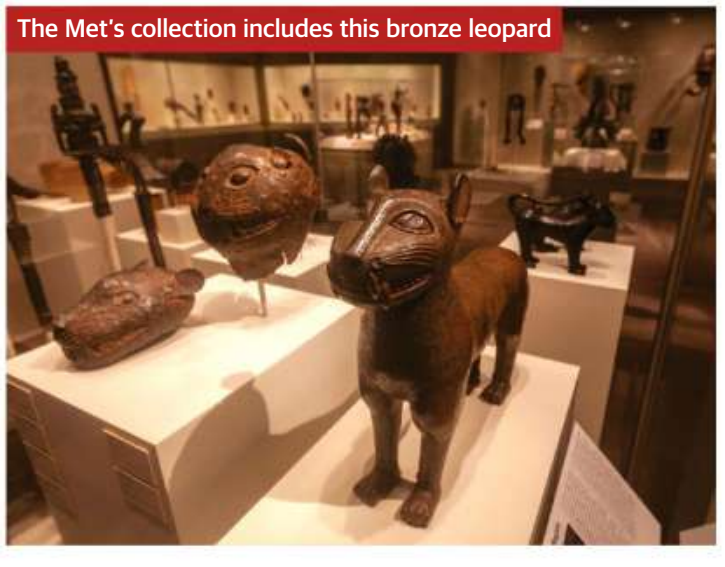
3 BRITISH MUSEUM
LONDON, UK

The British Museum was first opened to the public in 1759. It had been founded in 1753 when the UK Parliament established it as the first free public museum in the world. The founding collection of the museum was purchased from the physician Sir Hans Sloane, who had amassed a huge assortment of artefacts over his lifetime. There are now over 8 million artefacts held by the British Museum, many of which are of special historical and cultural significance to civilisations and societies from around the world. The museum is candid about the manner in which many of the objects in its possession were acquired, highlighting the role the British Empire and colonisation have played throughout history. It holds one of the largest collections of Benin Bronzes in the world, with 900 artefacts in its possession. 100 of these are permanently on display for the public to view. On the museum's website the occupation of Benin by the British from 1897 is described as "bloody and devastating," with acknowledgement of the controversial nature of the museum holding the bronzes, most of which were acquired through the purchasing of private collections. Like many other museums, the British Museum is in conversation with officials in Nigeria to discuss the future of the artefacts and is a member of the Benin Dialogue Group.

The museum is open every day from 10am-5pm, and is open until 8.30pm on Friday

4 METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
NEW YORK CITY, USA

Founded in 1870, the Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met) in New York holds one of the finest collections of art from around the world and throughout history. This collection includes around 160 objects from the Kingdom of Benin. Two of the plaques held in the collection were acquired through a donation in 1991 from an anonymous collector in New York. These bronzes had been sent to Lagos, Nigeria, from the British Museum in 1950. The collector had come into possession of them through the international art market, though the exact details of how the bronzes ended up on the market after their return to Nigeria are unknown. In 2021, The Met returned the 16th century plaques, known as *Warrior Chief* and *Junior Court Official*, to Nigeria. The majority of the Met's Benin collection remains on display to the public, with one of the museum's most prized Benin pieces being the ivory mask of Queen Idia.


The Met's collection includes this bronze leopard

The Met is open Sunday to Tuesday and Thursday from 10am-5pm, and Friday to Saturday from 10am-9pm

5 ETHNOLOGISCHES MUSEUM
BERLIN, GERMANY

The Ethnologisches Museum is one of the institutions in Germany's capital under the umbrella of the Berlin State Museums. It was originally founded in 1873 and houses half-a-million objects of archaeological interest from across the world. The museum specialises in artefacts from four areas: Oceania, America, Asia and Africa. Its mission, as written on its website, states: "Ethnologisches Museum at the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin critically investigates the legacy and ramifications of colonialism, as well as the role and standpoint of Europe." The museum holds 512 artefacts from the Kingdom of Benin, most of which came into the museum's possession through the work of the anthropologist Felix von Luschan, who set about acquiring Benin artwork through his contacts in West Africa after Benin's colonisation. The collection is one of the largest in the world, alongside the group of pieces held by the British Museum.

The Ethnologisches Museum is, like many other museums with Benin artefacts, a member of the Benin Dialogue Group. In August 2022, the museum signed over the ownership of all 512 of their bronzes to Nigeria, and plans to start returning the objects by the end of the year. They have agreed that a third of the items will be loaned to Germany so they can remain on public display.

The museum is open Sunday to Thursday from 10am-8pm, Friday to Saturday from 10am-10pm and is closed on Tuesday.

The Humboldt Forum houses the Ethnologisches Museum

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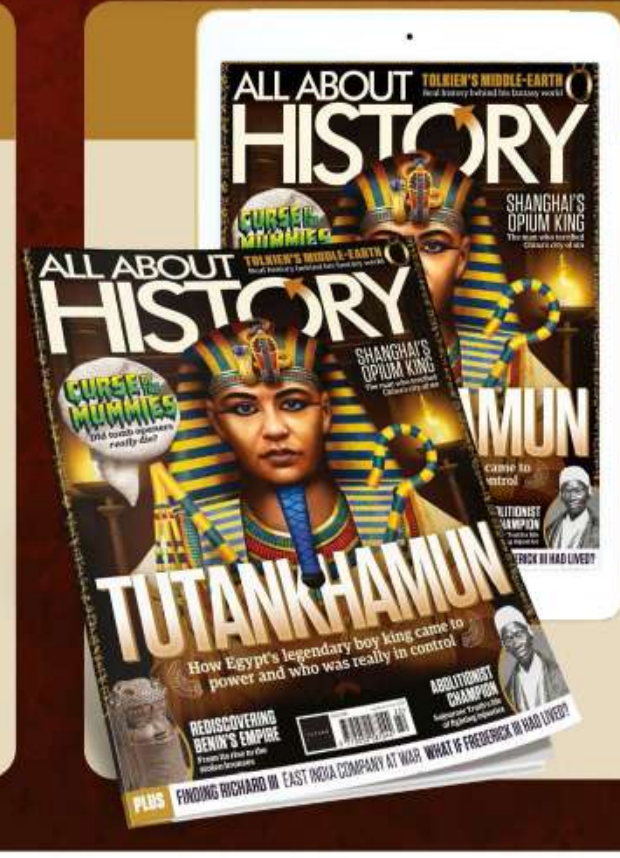
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TUTANK

TUTANKHAMUN

Written by Garry J Shaw

How Egypt's legendary boy king came to power and who was really in control

Illustration by Joe Cummings

EXPERT BIO

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GARRY J SHAW

Garry Shaw is an author and journalist covering archaeology, history and world heritage. He has a PhD in Egyptology, and his new book *The Story of Tutankhamun: An Intimate Life of the Boy Who Became King*, will be published by Yale University Press on 11 October.

Follow him on Twitter @GarryShawEgypt and Instagram @garryjshaw

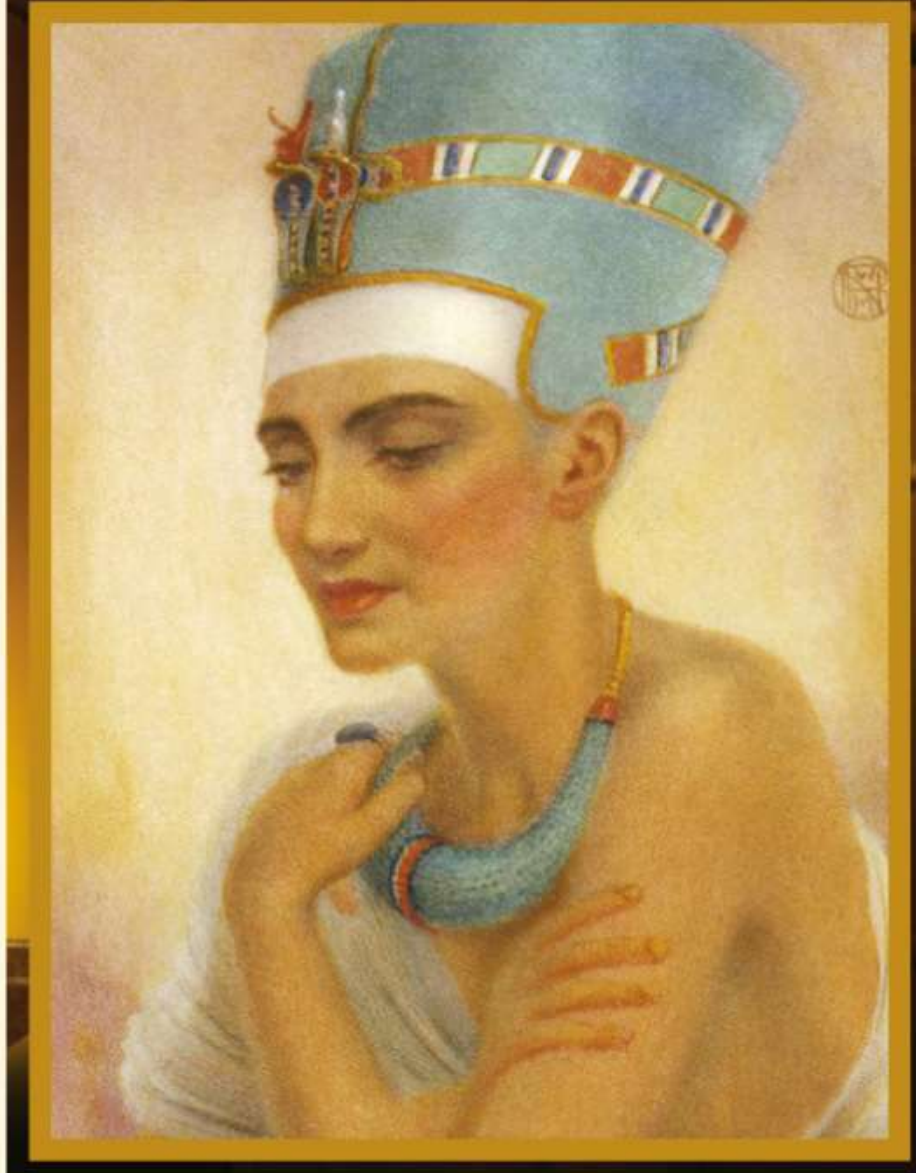
Tutankhamun – originally called Tutankhaten – was born around 1329 BCE. This was a time of great upheaval in Egypt, when the prince's father, King Akhenaten, had reformed the country's millennia-old traditions. With Queen Nefertiti, he had turned his back on the gods in favour of an obscure deity the Aten, or sun disc. As Akhenaten's reign progressed, the god Amun, king of the gods, was targeted for attacks. The king's followers smashed Amun's statues across Egypt and scratched away his name from monuments. Amun represented all that was hidden, so Akhenaten perhaps regarded him as the antithesis of the Aten's all-encompassing, life-giving light.

But as the years passed, other gods were attacked too. To symbolise Egypt's new beginning, Akhenaten moved the royal court to a newly built city in the desert, which he called Akhetaten – the Horizon of the Aten – today called Amarna. For years, people hauled blocks of stone from nearby quarries to build its temples, and worked in the intense heat making mud bricks for elite villas and palaces. The homes of the poor grew around these villas, and as the city developed, its workers died in large numbers; malnourished, overworked, and often young, they were buried on the outskirts of the city and forgotten. They paid the price for Akhenaten's dreams.

With this dramatic shift in religious devotion, Egypt's art style changed too. Directed by the king, the Amarna artists produced statues and carvings quite unlike any that came before or after him. Despite wearing the traditional regalia of a pharaoh, Akhenaten was carved with a round belly and spindly legs and arms – far from the youthful, muscular and fit bodies that pharaohs typically chose for their official art. Temples changed too. Gone were their dark and mysterious sanctuaries, where the gods' statues stood in shrines, awaiting gifts and praise from priests. Temples to the Aten were open to the sky, embracing the sun's rays, which reached down to touch hundreds of offering tables laden with food and drink. This was the new Egypt in which Tutankhamun grew up.

Tutankhamun was the son of Akhenaten and one of the king's sisters. He spent his earliest years with his wet-nurse, Maia, who later had a tomb built for herself at the ancient necropolis of Saqqara. Within, she included a scene of the young prince sitting on her lap. Around age four, while Amarna remained under construction, Tutankhamun began his education. One of his tutors was a man named Sennedjem who, among his duties, taught the young king to ride chariots, perhaps near the city of Akhmim where the tutor would eventually be buried. To keep his hands and feet safe from rocks and sand as he rode along, Tutankhamun wore gloves

> "As a child, Tutankhamun must have been heavily influenced by his father's new vision for Egypt"



TOP A stele from Amarna showing King Akhenaten (left) and Queen Nefertiti (right) with three of their daughters beneath the Aten's rays. The future Queen Ankhesenamun is on Nefertiti's shoulder

ABOVE Nefertiti was not Tutankhamun's birth mother, but would have been an important influence on his life

and socks – not unusual for a charioteer. He carried his love of riding into his teenage years.

The young prince also learned how to read and write. He owned scribal equipment that bore his name, and dipped his red ink-covered pen into one water pot so often that the pot became stained. If he followed the typical curriculum of a scribal student, Tutankhamun first studied the cursive script hieratic, used in administration and correspondence, before moving on to the sacred hieroglyphs found on the walls of tombs and temples. With his tutors' guidance, he would have spent a great deal of time copying and recopying set texts, including already ancient classics such as *The Tale of Sinuhe*, about a courtier who fled to the Levant, and wisdom texts attributed to the great kings of the past. Certain teachings perhaps came directly from Akhenaten. The king saw himself as a teacher to his courtiers and composed hymns to the Aten, which were copied onto their tomb walls. As a child, Tutankhamun must have been heavily influenced by his father's new vision for Egypt. He would have accepted the closure of the ancient temples and the destruction of divine statues as normal.

But this new world didn't last. Akhenaten died after 17 years as king, plunging his religious experiment into uncertainty. This was not the first emotional pain that Tutankhamun had felt in his short life. Over the years, multiple tragedies had struck the royal family. Three of Tutankhamun's half-sisters had died, as had his grandmother, Queen Tiye, plus the obscure co-regent Smenkhkare and a secondary queen named Kiya. ▶

RIGHT
Tutankhamun's father Akhenaten had tried to move Egypt away from its pluralist religion

SYMBOLS OF POWER

Items that helped pharaohs exude wealth and authority

CROOK AND FLAIL

Originally linked solely to the god Osiris, the crook and flail later became a combined symbol of pharaonic authority. The shepherd's crook stood for the power and responsibility of kingship, while the flail was shorthand for the fertility of the land.

NEMES HEADDRESS

Less of a crown and more a symbol of a pharaoh's power, the nemes was a headdress that covered the whole crown, the back of the head and the nape of the neck. Usually striped with gold (to represent the ruler's wealth), the nemes had two large flaps that hung behind the ears and draped over the front of the shoulders.

ANKH

The ankh, which is usually grasped in the left hand of a pharaoh, is one of the most important symbols associated with the pharaohs. It represents the concept of eternal life, a state of being that was close to the hearts of the pharaohs, as represented by their tombs and monuments. The ankh also represents religious pluralism (all gods as one).

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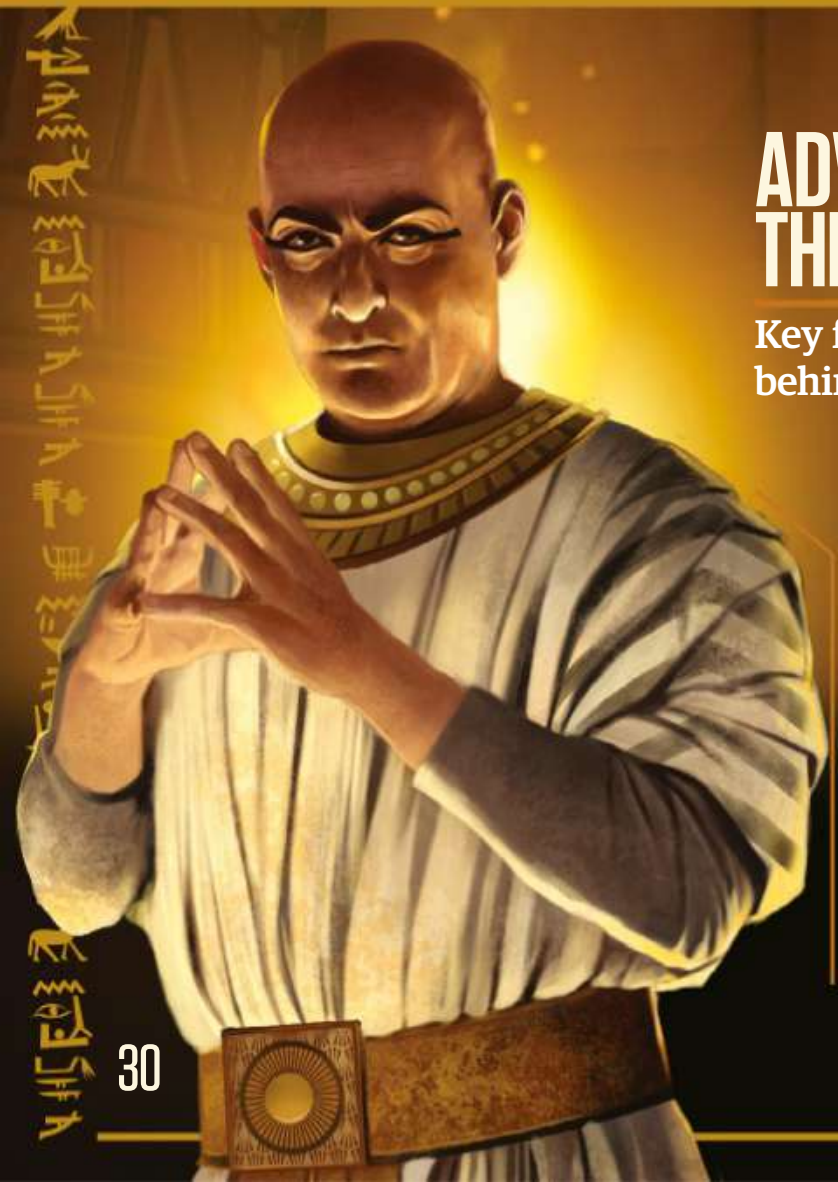
LEFT King Tutankhamun pours water onto the hand of his wife, Queen Ankhesenamun. Both were married at a young age and were half siblings

BELOW A god's hand touches the back of Tutankhamun's Blue Crown, indicating that the complete statue represented a ritual from the king's coronation



ADVISERS TO THE BOY KING

Key figures who worked behind the scenes

AYE

Ay (sometimes spelt Ay) was the immediate successor to Tutankhamun and had been one of the three men who acted as the young king's chief advisors. He had risen as a political figure under Akhenaten, but is thought to have been one of the chief architects of the transition back to traditional Egyptian culture and religious practices under Tutankhamun.

HOREMHEB

This celebrated military figure became pharaoh after the death of Ay, with whom he had worked in advising Tutankhamun. He had been a commander in the Egyptian military, leading campaigns on the young king's behalf. As pharaoh, he continued the moves away from the worship of Aten and back to Amun, the king of the Egyptian gods at that time.

MAYA

Serving the last three pharaohs of the 18th dynasty as treasurer, Maya was one of the most influential men of his era. The role meant he was in charge of domestic affairs, which given the upheaval around religious reforms and undoing the work of Akhenaten, must have been a tremendous undertaking. Maya is believed to have served Ay, but he died during the reign of Horemheb.

It isn't clear how they died, but during this time plague was running rampant around the Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East. Amarna was not immune, particularly as people from across the Egyptians' known world visited the city. Bubonic plague even afflicted the royal artisans who cut and decorated Amarna's elite tombs, the disease spread by fleas in their homes.

With Akhenaten dead, the throne seems to have passed to Queen Nefertiti, ruling as King Neferneferuaten. Her reign became a time of transition. Perhaps under pressure from more traditionally minded nobles, she allowed the old gods to regain their positions. The Aten remained their equal, however, and the court continued to operate from Amarna. All around Tutankhamun, a different Egypt re-emerged – a place of deep traditions that had existed for thousands

> "All around Tutankhamun, a different Egypt re-emerged – a place of deep traditions that had existed for thousands of years"

of years. He was now expected to worship gods that had been dismissed in Akhenaten's day. Abandoned rituals reappeared. Prayers unspoken for nearly 20 years were uttered again. It must have been a confusing and stressful time – even more so, when, after only three years as king, Neferneferuaten died. At just ten years old, then, the crown fell to Tutankhamun. During his coronation ceremony, the royal *ka*, or spirit of kingship, entered his body and transformed him from a prince into a pharaoh.

THE COURT

As king, Tutankhamun was thrust into a world of politics and power that he had only ever watched from the sidelines. Each day, sitting on his throne, raised high on a dais, he presided over a meeting with his highest courtiers. For these occasions, Tutankhamun held a child-size crook and flail, symbols of his divine office, and wore the false beard of kings, wrapped with wire around his ears. A yellow and blue striped nemes headdress sat on his

ABOVE A painted ivory plaque from the tomb of Tutankhamun, showing the young king using his cane

BELOW Some detail from the back of Tutankhamun's thrown, showing the king with his queen

head. His feet, shod in sandals, perched on a footrest decorated with pictures of Egypt's enemies. From this high vantage point,he watched the vizier and other courtiers enter the audience hall and pay their respects. They updated him on the condition of Egypt and together discussed the important matters of the day. It's impossible to know how much interest the young king had in what they said, but tradition dictated that he be present at such meetings – any deviation from correct order, or *maat* to the Egyptians, brought about chaos – and over recent years the country had experienced more than enough of that. Usually, when a prince became king at a young age, the dowager queen managed affairs. This had happened when King Ahmose I came to the throne as a child and Queen Ahhotep I oversaw Egypt; and later, when Queen – later King – Hatshepsut ruled during King Tuthmosis III's youth. But with Queen Tiye and Queen Nefertiti dead – and seemingly Tutankhamun's mother too – there was no senior family member to guide him. Those closest to Tutankhamun, those in a position to influence his thinking, were his wife Ankhesenamun; his tutors, perhaps still including Sennedjem; and the highest court nobles, many still serving from the time of his father. First among these courtiers was Horemheb – a man called Paatenemheb under Akhenaten. The leader of Egypt's armies, he now gained the title of king's deputy, which gave him the power to oversee every government department – this included the palace administration and, by extension, control over Tutankhamun's daily life. Next, there was Aye, whose sister had earlier married King Amenhotep III, bringing them into the royal family's circle. He acted as a close royal advisor and accompanied the king in his daily duties. Finally, there was the chief treasurer Maya, who managed the kingdom's assets. These three men were the major influences on Tutankhamun from his first days on the throne.

THE ROYAL FAMILY

By the time of his coronation, Tutankhamun had married one of his half-sisters – a daughter of Nefertiti and Akhenaten, called Ankhesenamun, who was probably around a year older than him. As queen of Egypt, she represented the female side of kingship, and joined Tutankhamun during ceremonies, audiences and rituals. Various objects show the royal couple together. On the side of a small golden shrine, they hunt birds in the marshes – Ankhesenamun

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gives the young king an arrow to shoot at his unsuspecting prey. In another scene, her enthroned husband pours water on her hands, purifying them. One of Tutankhamun's board games was also inscribed with the royal couple's names. It has drawers to store the gaming pieces, so it's possible that they played it together when travelling. The royal couple faced personal tragedies too. Over the course of their marriage, they twice tried to have children, but both pregnancies ended in loss. Their stillborn daughters were mummified and eventually buried in Tutankhamun's tomb.

A few years into his reign, Tutankhamun decided to bring the bodies of his family from Amarna to the Valley of the Kings in Luxor for reburial. Without a reason to exist, Amarna would soon be reclaimed by the desert sands. He commanded that his grandmother, Queen Tiye, be interred with her husband, King Amenhotep III, though the gilded wooden frame that had surrounded her sarcophagus at Amarna was kept in a small, undecorated tomb,

> "Tutankhamun presented himself as a son of the king of the gods"

now known as KV 55 (KV standing for King's Valley). Tiye and Tutankhamun's lives only briefly overlapped, but she must have been important to him, for he kept a lock of her hair in a small coffin among his own possessions. KV 55 also became the final resting place of Akhenaten – if indeed, the skeleton within is actually him. He was placed in a repurposed coffin, originally made for Queen Kiya, surrounded by other objects from Amarna. Tutankhamun had abandoned his father's teachings, and now represented Egypt's return to tradition, but he must have still felt responsible for ensuring his heretic father's afterlife well-being.

THE RESTORATION

Although the royal court had abandoned Amarna for the traditional royal city of Memphis, Akhenaten's legacy was everywhere. The temples of the gods remained neglected across Egypt. Smashed statues lay where they'd fallen. Divine names had been scratched away from monuments. As king, this was a problem that Tutankhamun had to address – either by his own volition or, more likely given his young age and education in the Amarna ways, at the suggestion of his courtiers. As a starting point, Tutankhamun commissioned an inscription that described Egypt's woeful state. Not only were the temples in ruin, the inscription explained, but the gods had abandoned the country and Egypt's armies failed when sent abroad to fight. Tutankhamun had fixed all of this, it continued. The young king had rebuilt the temples and pleased the gods. Egypt had returned to a state of order. In reality, none of this had happened yet, but in ancient Egypt, the written word had magical power – writing something down made it a reality. Craftsmen dutifully carved the text into stone stelae and erected them at temples across the country, including at the Temple of Amun at Karnak – the home of Akhenaten's most hated god. Like other royal stelae, its content was probably read aloud to crowds on festival occasions, spreading the word of Tutankhamun's good deeds.

With this statement of intent 'published', craftsmen mobilised across Egypt to restore what had been broken or destroyed. Workshops produced carvings of gods, each bearing the face of Tutankhamun. Early in his reign, these reflected his young age, while those made later showed him as a teenager. This was not unusual. It was traditional for divine statues produced under a king to bear his idealised portrait and for this to change over the years. What wasn't normal was the sheer number of statues that had to be carved – Akhenaten's vandals had been thorough. Statues acted as bodies for the gods' divine forces to inhabit when receiving offerings, for which, in return, they ensured Egypt's success. By destroying these vessels, Akhenaten had cut off one of their ways to interact with humanity. Egypt's most important divine statues were kept in

ABOVE
Tutankhamun's Restoration Stele describes how the king restored the temples and brought Egypt back to a state of order after a time when the gods had abandoned the country

ABOVE-RIGHT
A depiction of Queen Nefertiti performing a ceremony

the temple sanctuaries but other, larger statues populated the temple enclosures too. These also bore Tutankhamun's face, including one of the god Khonsu, the young son of Amun, at Karnak. With this statue, Tutankhamun presented himself as a son of the king of the gods, and showed that he had fully turned his back on his father's teachings.

RITUALS AND FESTIVALS

One of Tutankhamun's most important duties was leading religious festivals. As pharaoh – a role that made him intermediary between people and the gods – this was not something that he could avoid because of his youth. Being a semi-divine being came with obligations. Although high priests usually made divine offerings in the temples, certain royal festivals required the king's presence. Consequently, pharaohs travelled frequently, moving with the court and their servants to palaces or temporary lodgings across the country. On their journeys, they would take foldable furniture with them – Tutankhamun owned both a folding bed and a folding head rest.

One of Egypt's most important annual events was the Opet Festival, in which the king travelled from Karnak Temple to Luxor Temple, accompanied by the gods Amun, Mut and Khonsu, to re-energise his royal *ka* – the spirit of kingship. Luxor Temple held a special significance to Tutankhamun. The construction of its Colonnade Hall had begun under his grandfather, King Amenhotep III, but it had been abandoned by Akhenaten. Tutankhamun – or, at least, one of his advisors – decided that it would be a powerful symbol of continuity and respect for the gods to finish the hall's decoration. So, as the years passed, Luxor Temple's priests watched craftsmen carve and paint scenes of the Opet Festival, eternalising Tutankhamun and Ankhesenamun's presence at the event.

RIGHT A bust of Tutankhamun holding the symbolic crook and flail

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ABOVE Hunting was a popular hobby for Egypt's pharaohs, and Tutankhamun was no different. On this fan, he is shown hunting ostriches from his chariot, firing arrows at his prey

> "Within a few years, General Horemheb became pharaoh, usurped Tutankhamun's monuments, and took responsibility for his achievements"

Despite a calendar already filled with festivals, extra ritual tasks could arise that required Tutankhamun's attention. During his later teenage years, the sacred apis bull of Memphis died, forcing the priests to seek out a successor. According to tradition, this bull was an incarnation of the god Ptah, the creator god of Memphis, and could be identified by specific markings such as the shape of an eagle on its back and a white diamond on its head. Once craftsmen had constructed the bull's tomb at the sacred necropolis of Saqqara, and the bull itself had been mummified, Tutankhamun presided over the funerary ceremonies. He wore a form of religious scarf, made from faience beads, inscribed for the gods Ptah and Sokar, and left offerings for the bull inside the tomb.

EMPIRE AND WARFARE

Over the centuries before Tutankhamun's reign, Egypt's pharaohs had expanded their territory south along the Nile into Nubia and created a new government position to manage the region – the Viceroy of Kush. One of Tutankhamun's duties was to install an official named Huy into this role. The young king presided over the ceremony, watching from his throne as Huy received the seal of office from an official. The newly appointed viceroy then left the palace audience hall to begin his journey south. Years later, Huy returned to the royal court. He was accompanied by Nubian leaders and prisoners, perhaps caught during a rebellion, and servants carrying tribute, including live animals, gold and shields.

The Egyptians also held territory to their north-east, encompassing much of the Levant up to Syria. Under Akhenaten, Egypt had lost control of Qadesh, one of its key cities in this region, to the

BELOW-LEFT General Horemheb was Egypt's most powerful courtier under Tutankhamun. Here, he receives gifts from the king as reward for his excellent work

BELOW This mural from Tutankhamun's burial chamber shows him with the gods Anubis (left) and Hathor (right)

EGYPT'S YOUNG PHARAOHS

Tutankhamun was far from the only child to rule Egypt

CLEOPATRA VII THEA PHILOPATOR

Became pharaoh aged: 18
Reign: 51 – 30 BCE

The famous queen of Egypt, who would prove to be the last pharaoh of her kingdom, took the throne alongside her brother after the death of their father, Ptolemy XII. She famously hitched her fortunes to Julius Caesar and then Mark Antony, but saw her power fall as each was killed during internal Roman power struggles.

AMENHOTEP III

Became pharaoh aged: 12
Reign: c.1391 – 1353 BCE

Tutankhamun's paternal grandfather had also ascended the Egyptian throne at a very young age and shared similar interests with his future heir. We know he enjoyed hunting, for instance, because he issued commemorative scarabs celebrating his feats. Amenhotep III is remembered as a diplomatic and peaceful ruler.

PTOLEMY XIII THEOS PHILOPATOR

Became pharaoh aged: 11
Reign: 51 – 47 BCE

One of two brothers of Cleopatra who shared the Egyptian throne, Ptolemy XIII became king alongside his sister after the death of their father. He initially backed Pompey the Great against Caesar during the Alexandrian War and would come to oppose him again after Caesar's victory, only to be killed.

TUTANKHAMUN

Became pharaoh aged: 10
Reign: c.1332 – 1323 BCE

The young king only served for around nine years on the throne of Egypt and seems to have dealt with a number of health issues during that time. He contracted malaria, suffered from a degenerative bone condition, had a clubfoot necessitating the use of a cane, had a cleft palate and a weakened immune system.

PEPI II NEFERKARE

Became pharaoh aged: 6
Reign: c. 2278 – c. 2184

Nearly 1,000 years before Tutankhamun became pharaoh, Pepi II ascended at an even younger age and may have ruled for as long as 94 years. Possibly as a result of the exceptional length of his reign, his kingdom was weakened by internal strife over the years, leaving Egypt vulnerable in the immediate aftermath.

Hittites, an expanding civilisation from Turkey. This gave the Hittites greater control over lucrative trade networks – a major strategic loss for Egypt. In his later years as king, Tutankhamun decided to rectify this situation. He despatched General Horemheb to lead Egypt's armies to Qadesh, battles were fought and, at some point, Egyptian soldiers marched with severed hands on their spears. One prisoner was held in a cage and brought back to Egypt by boat. Ultimately though, Qadesh remained in Hittite hands. The campaign must have been a failure. Nonetheless, Horemheb returned to a grand reception at court and paraded his prisoners, each tied to the other, before Tutankhamun and Ankhesenamun. The king himself then took some of these prisoners to the Temple of Amun at Karnak, to offer them – and perhaps even execute a few – before the resurgent god.

TUTANKHAMUN'S FINAL DAYS

Over the course of his life, Tutankhamun contracted different strains of malaria, which must have left him intermittently feeling weak and ill, and his club foot made it difficult to walk. On one occasion when visiting a temple, he pulled a reed rush from the ground, perhaps to help steady himself for his religious duties. His servants kept this improvised stick and ensured that it was put in his tomb. None of these problems stopped the young king from living an active life. Like other pharaohs, Tutankhamun enjoyed hunting on his chariot – racing along after his prey, shooting arrows from his bow, while another man steered the horses. The wheels of two of his chariots became so worn that parts of them had to be replaced. One popular hunting ground was Giza, where he had a small palace built beside the Great Sphinx, and he hunted ostriches near the city of Heliopolis too.

Tutankhamun was perhaps out hunting on his chariot when he suffered a severe accident. He broke his leg, leaving an open wound pouring with blood. There was little that the palace doctors could do – the severity of the injury made it impossible for him to recover. Within days, Tutankhamun was dead. He was only 19. The king now began his second life, joining the sun god on his eternal journey through the day and night skies, battling against the forces of chaos to protect the cosmos. It was an important duty, the fate of all pharaohs, but the living didn't care. Within a few years, General Horemheb became pharaoh, usurped Tutankhamun's monuments, and took responsibility for his achievements. Later kings omitted Tutankhamun from their lists of royal predecessors. The Amarna era – and anyone associated with it – was to be obliterated from memory.

By chance, though, Tutankhamun's tomb remained safe. A year after the royal funeral a rare storm had sent flash-flood debris hurtling down the Valley of the Kings. When the water subsided, Tutankhamun's tomb lay hidden beneath a metre of hard rubble. It remained that way for over 3,000 years, until 4 November 1922, when its first steps were rediscovered. Three weeks later, on 26 November, archaeologist Howard Carter held a candle through a hole forced in the tomb's entranceway and saw "wonderful things". From that moment, Tutankhamun lived again.

BELOW The rediscovery of Tutakhamun's tomb brought his name back to life

BELOW-INSET Tutankhamun's death mask covered the head of his mummy. With the gold skin of a god, the king wears the striped nemes headdress and a false beard associated with divinity

All images: © Alamy

THE STORY OF TUTANKHAMUN: (YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS) IS AVAILABLE FROM 11 OCTOBER 2022

CURSE OF THE MUMMY'S TOMB

From a fashionable Victorian fad to a murdering 20th century horror icon, we trace the origins of the mummy's curse

Written by Callum McKelvie

One by one, the archaeologists are picked off - death is the only punishment for the recipients of the mummy's curse. Not the plot of any one film in particular, but we all know the supposed fate that befalls anyone who desecrates a pharaoh's tomb. You likely also know about the discovery of King Tutankhamun and with it, arguably the most famous curse story of them all. But where exactly do these stories of marauding mummies and ancient curses come from? There were actual hieroglyphs warning of curses left by the ancient Egyptians in a number of tombs, but the idea of the mummy as a piece of contemporary folklore has its origins, like many figures of gothic horror, with the Victorians.

'EGYPTOMANIA'

"The history of the Victorians in Egypt is fascinating," Lauren R Bruce, author of the popular blog Gothic Bookworm, explains. "It stems from colonialist violence. In the early 1800s, just after the Napoleonic campaign, there were large numbers of travellers and tourists, both professional and just for leisure, heading to Egypt." The French campaign into Egypt began in 1798 and saw a wealth of historical artefacts removed and taken back to France, where these objects began to be studied by European scholars and academics for the first time. Jean-François Champollion became the first man to decipher hieroglyphics in 1822, leading to him becoming known as 'the father of Egyptology'. A growing curiosity in the culture of the long dead civilisation began, resulting in both a scientific and cultural interest. This interest helped create a frenzy for anything Egyptian, which has been coined 'Egyptomania'.

From the early 1800s onwards, the British maintained Egypt as a sphere of influence. Its

EXPERT BIOS

© Roger Luckhurst

ROGER LUCKHURST

A professor of Modern English at Birbeck, University of London, he has written a number of books on horror tropes including *Zombies: A Cultural History* (Reaktion Books, 2015) and *Gothic: An Illustrated History* (Thames and Hudson, 2021). He is the author of *The Mummy's Curse: The True History of a Dark Fantasy* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

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LAUREN R BRUCE

Lauren R Bruce is a PhD student who researches Victorian Egyptomania. She focuses on how the mummy is perceived in travel narratives, museum displays and visual culture. Bruce is also co-founder and co-chair of The International Society for the Study of Egyptomania. She is on social media @gothicbookworm.

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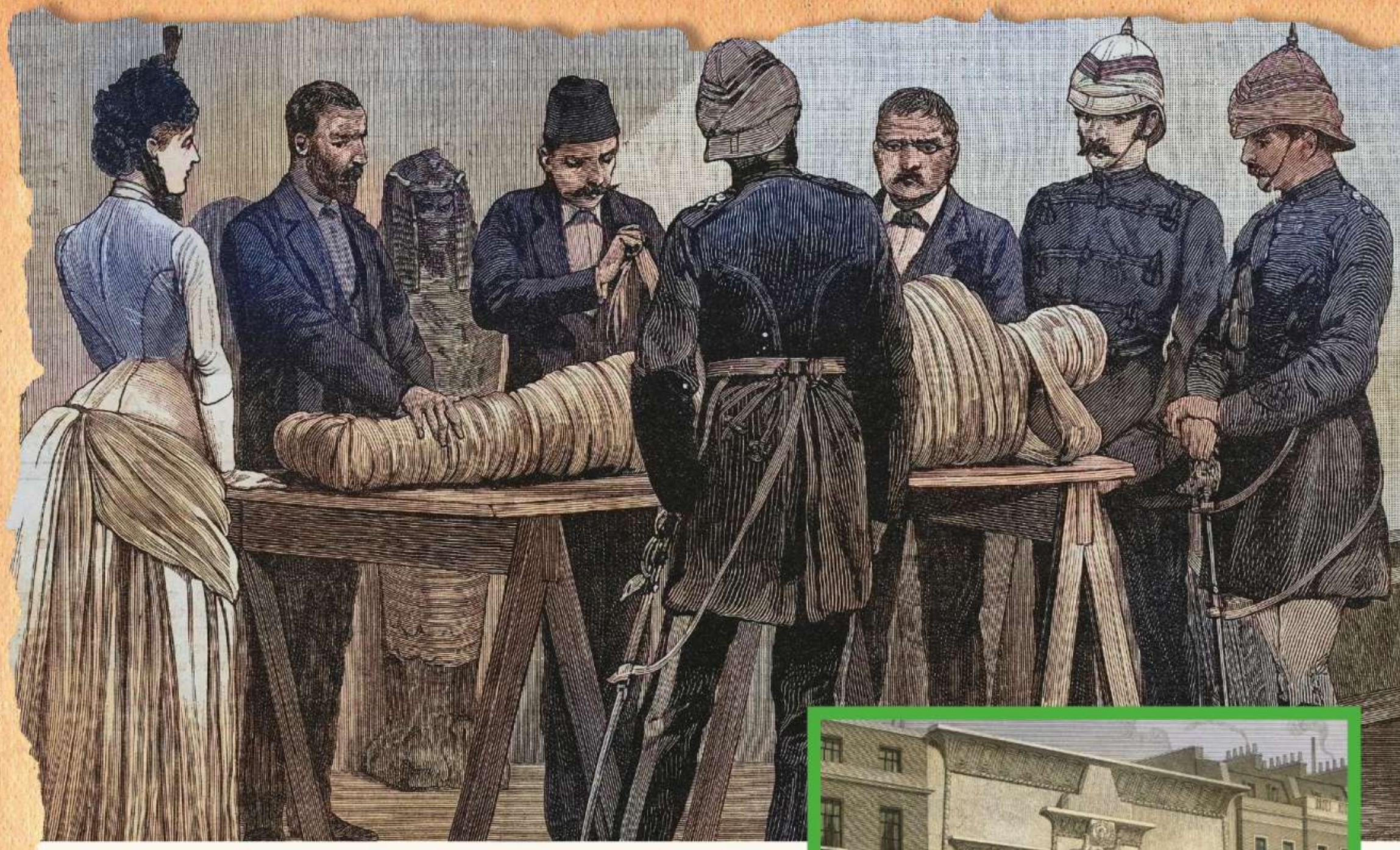

SOON MUMMIES, OR AT LEAST PARTS OF THEM, BECAME DESIRED TRINKETS

imperial interests would eventually clash with a growing nationalist movement and result in war in 1882. To the British public, however, Egyptomania meant that the country and its ruins began to represent all things exotic and mystic. In 1818, poets Percy Bysshe Shelley and Horace Smith participated in a competition to create works based on Ozymandias, or Ramses II. In 1894 Oscar Wilde similarly used the exoticism of Egypt in his 74-line poem *The Sphinx*. And Egyptian-inspired architectural designs began to appear, such as Egyptian Avenue in Highgate Cemetery.

Perhaps the grandest monument to Egytomania was the Egyptian Hall, built in 1812 by Victorian collector William Bullock to house his natural history and archaeological collection of roughly 32,000 objects. Another enterprising figure was ex-circus strongman and explorer Giovanni Belzoni. He had gone to Egypt to sell water wheels in a business venture that had failed. In order to make the trip financially viable, he instead began treasure hunting. "He did lots of tomb raiding in Egypt," Roger Luckhurst, author of *The Mummy's Curse: The True History of a Dark Fantasy*, explains. "He then reconstructed a famous tomb from the Valley of the Kings in London. For a price people could immerse themselves in this amazing burial chamber." But demand for Egyptian antiquities had already taken on a dark side, and the Victorian obsession began to surface in a number of shocking ways.

Perhaps the most infamous of these were the now notorious 'Mummy unwrapping parties'. Although the first recorded account of a mummy unwrapping can in fact be dated to 1698, public 'unwrappings' became incredibly popular during the 19th century. "Some of these were ostensibly scientific," Luckhurst tells us. "You would go to the Royal Institution and watch a fairly gruesome exercise of unravelling the bandages of a mummy." Others, however, occurred at the homes of the upper classes as a somewhat twisted form of entertainment. "Of course some involved activities such as wrenching the arms off," he adds. "They were looking for jewels and precious materials that were wrapped into the mummy when they were buried."

Soon mummies, or at least parts of them, became desired trinkets. As a result, to those who could afford it, tomb raiding excursions into the land of the pharaohs became disturbingly popular. "In the 1870s

TOP A depiction of a mummy unwrapping in Cairo in 1886

MIDDLE William Bullock's Egyptian Hall, which was built to house his various exhibits of natural history and archaeology

ABOVE Boris Karloff, under heavy makeup, terrorises Bramwell Fletcher in the chilling opening scene of the 1932 classic *The Mummy*

they were seen as the ultimate souvenir," Bruce explains. "Everyone wanted a piece of Egypt – literally – even if it was a hand or a foot. Heads were also unfortunately popular." Holiday provider Thomas Cook was the first to offer pleasure trips for tourists who could afford it. These involved journeys along the Nile on paddle steamer boats and visits to a number of ruins. However, some tourists would also visit mummy pits and engage in digging for their own mummies. Even the so-called 'Queen of Egyptology', archaeologist Amelia Edwards, had been known to pilfer the odd mummy herself. "There are stories of some professionals helping their tourist friends to smuggle mummies out of the country," Bruce reveals. "Edwards not only helped her friend Marianne Brocklehurst to smuggle a mummy back to Britain but apparently also brought back two mummy heads herself and kept them in her wardrobe."

THE CURSE STRIKES

It was towards the end of the 19th century, as Egyptomania reached its peak, that a number of eerie stories of curses began to surface. One of the most infamous is that of 'the unlucky mummy'. Despite the name, this is not in fact a cadaver but a 'mummy board'. These were wooden boards which had been painted with the likeness of the deceased and placed over the body. The legend states that Thomas Douglas Murray, something of an amateur Egyptologist, purchased a board around 1865 and paid no heed to the curse associated with it. Upon returning he promptly lost his arm during a shooting accident. The mummy board was passed around, granting nothing but misfortune to whomever the current owner was. When medium Madame Helena Blavatsky declared it an object of evil influence, it was promptly presented to the British Museum as a gift.

In 1904 journalist Bertram Fletcher Robinson published his account of the tale on the front page of the *Daily Express*, quickly capturing the public imagination. A mere four years later, at the age of 37, he would meet his own end from typhoid fever. Was he another victim of the mummy's vengeance? The public liked to think so and over time the stories surrounding the 'unlucky mummy' began to grow in number, if not in believability. The story of Murray's acquisition of the board was turned into that of a group of four friends, one of whom lost their arm and another who wandered into the desert never to return. The most infamous tale surrounding the mummy

MUMMIES AT THE MOVIES

A selection of some of the best, worst and most bizarre mummy films ever to grace the silver screen

THE MUMMY'S HAND *1940*

Universal's first sequel to their 1932 classic enters pure B-movie territory and solidified the notion of the mummy as a bandaged marauding murderer. Despite its low budget the production nonetheless managed to look better than its three sequels due to its reuse of sets from James Whale's *Green Hell*. With more of a focus on adventure and comedy than horror, it's a fairly standard affair, which pales in comparison to its more lavish predecessor.

THE MUMMY *1959*

Hammer Films sought to capitalise on the success of their versions of *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* with a gothic take on *The Mummy*. Christopher Lee found himself under the bandages going against Peter Cushing as the heroic archaeologist. "It doesn't get as much love as it should," says Bruce. "Some aspects of the film, especially in the first half, are anti-colonialist, although the 'evil' Kharis does end up being the villain." Sumptuous, with superb performances, it may be the finest mummy film of all time.

WRESTLING WOMEN VS THE AZTEC MUMMY *1964*

It wasn't just Egyptian mummies that terrorised cinema goers. During the late 1950s and 1960s Mexico produced a small number of 'Aztec mummy' movies. This particular film was one of a number of sequels to 1962's *Doctor of Doom* and starred Lorena Velazquez and Elizabeth Campbell as a pair of female wrestlers. Unfortunately the schlocky title makes it sound more entertaining than it actually is. You're better off checking out 1957's *The Robot vs the Aztec Mummy*.

BLOOD FROM THE MUMMY'S TOMB *1971*

Hammer's last entry in its series of four mummy films is an adaptation of Bram Stoker's *The Jewel of the Seven Stars*. The film had a troubled production, with original star Peter Cushing's wife passing, leading him to be replaced by Andrew Keir. Later, the director Seth Holt suffered a heart attack on set. This led some members of the production to believe the film was cursed. The final result is an overlooked oddity, dreamlike and decidedly creepy.

DAWN OF THE MUMMY *1981*

This low-budget offering owes more to the zombie films of late 1970s than it does the classic mummy films of old. Telling the story of a group of fashion models who disturb an ancient tomb, awakening the vengeful mummy within, this is an overtly sleazy and nasty affair. Its extreme violence led it to be seized during the 'video nasty' panic. However, the authentic location results in some eerie sequences with hordes of the undead rising from the sands.

THE MUMMY *1999*

Stephen Sommer's blockbuster was a huge success upon its release and launched a franchise of sequels, spin offs and an animated series. While not overtly a horror film, this version balances Indiana Jones-style adventure with scares and well-crafted humour. Despite some of its computer generated effects having aged badly, Sommers version remains beloved. For sheer entertainment value alone it remains one of the must-see mummy movies.

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ABOVE-LEFT The infamous 'unlucky mummy' from the British Museum on display during a press conference in Taiwan

ABOVE-MIDDLE Lord Carnarvon, whose mysterious death saw him linked to the 'curse of Tutankhamun'

ABOVE-RIGHT The remains of Tutankhamun, found by Howard Carter and his team

board supposedly took place in April 1912 when the cursed object was to be shipped to the United States. However, misfortune struck when the ship hit an iceberg and sank. That ship was the Titanic. All of this allegedly occurred despite the fact that the board is actually still the property of the British Museum and remains in its possession to this day, safe and dry.

As the stories of curses began to circulate in the gentleman's clubs of Britain, a number of authors sought to capitalise on the craze – with varying degrees of success. *Dracula* author Bram Stoker turned his hand to a mummy-based horror story in 1903 when he wrote *The Jewel of the Seven Stars*. Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes, also had a go at eerie Egyptian fiction with the fabulously creepy *Lot No. 249*. "It features the first character in literature to reanimate a mummy to go out and kill his enemies," says Luckhurst. "There is a very evocative scene where our Anglo Saxon hero is walking home at night and gets chased by this kind of spectral creature."

One author, however, was the victim of a purported 'real life' mummy curse. H Rider Haggard, best known for 1885's *King Solomon's Mines* and 1887's *She,* was supposedly sent a mummy by his brother who held a high ranking position in the Egyptian Army. "He only kept it in his house briefly." Luckhurst explains. "He doesn't really say in his autobiography exactly what happened. Apparently after a series of terrible nightmares he insisted that the mummy had to be moved from his house. It first went to the Norfolk Museum and was then moved to Liverpool. Haggard was never entirely clear about what happened."

Another popular curse story from the period concerned a British soldier known as Walter Ingram. "He apparently went to Egypt during the attempt to rescue General Gordon of Khartoum, who was trapped and under siege from an Islamic uprising," says Luckhurst. While there, Ingram purchased a mummy and set about that most popular pastime of the period: unwrapping it. Inside was a curse that dictated that due to this terrible crime he would meet an equally terrible fate. On 6 April 1888 Ingram was supposedly trampled by elephants during a Safari.

The story was widely reported in the *London Illustrated News* due to his father, Herbert, having founded the paper. Sometime later another Ingram with a connection to the paper was similarly the subject of yet another 'curse'. "The Bruce Ingram story is one of my favourites purely because it explores the mummy trade post the 19th century and demonstrates that the notion of curses was still around after Tutankhamun to some extent," Bruce tells us. "Body parts were much more easily smuggled than mummies." Sir Bruce Ingram was the editor of the *London Illustrated News* who was purportedly gifted a mummy's hand with a scarab bracelet that carried a curse declaring vengeance through 'fire, water and pestilence'. When Ingram's home burnt to the ground and was then very quickly flooded, he chose not to wait for pestilence and returned the hand to the person who was rumoured to have gifted it to him – the archaeologist Howard Carter.

THE CURSE OF TUTANKHAMUN

This brings us to arguably the most famous mummy curse of all time – that of Tutankhamun's tomb. Despite the fact that no curse was ever actually found inside the tomb, the preceding years

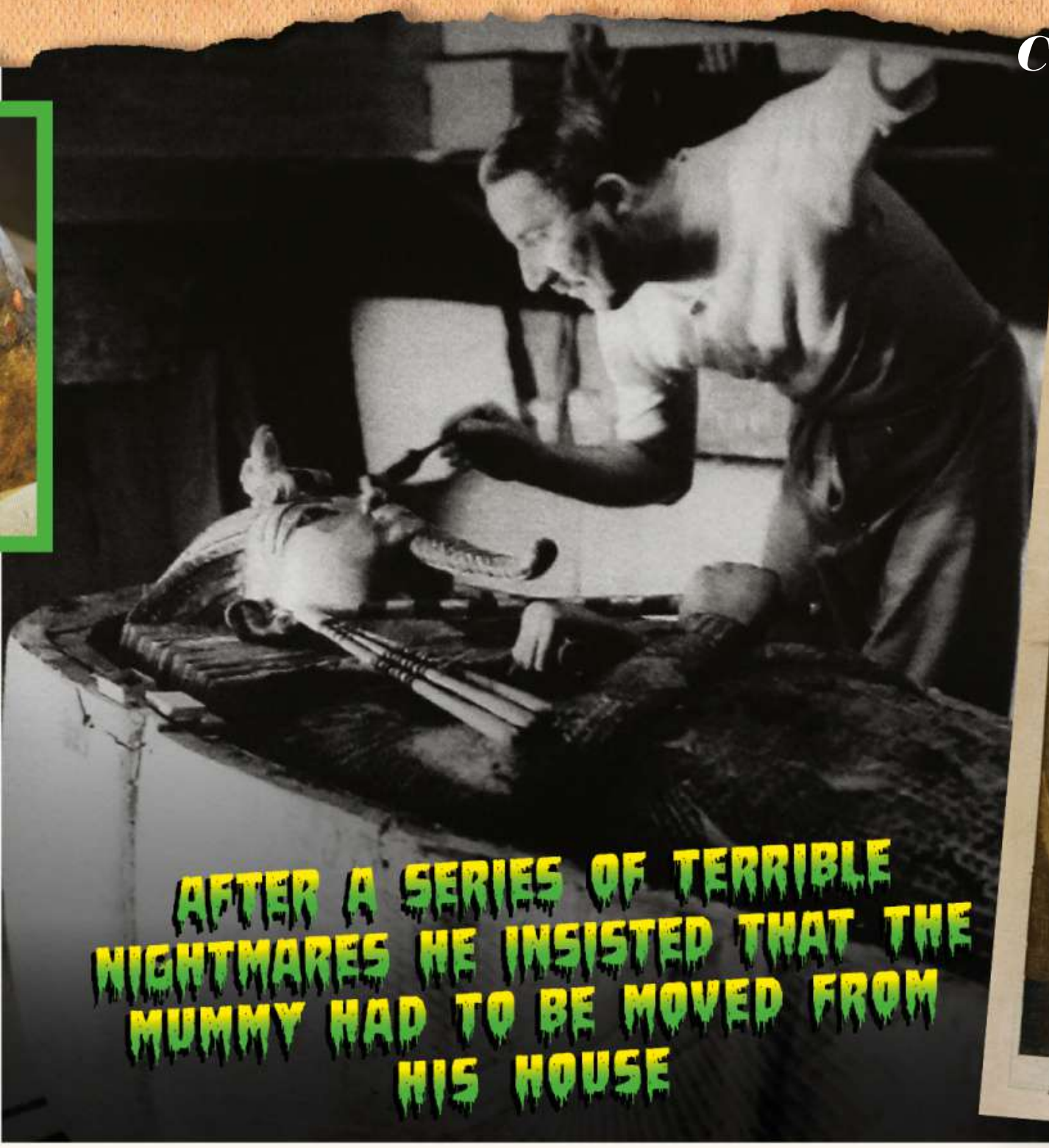
AN ICY CURSE

Since his discovery in 1991 a string of mysterious deaths have been linked to this enigmatic iceman

In 1991 a pair of climbers in western Austria made a grisly discovery when they came upon human remains in the ice. Initially suspected to be the victim of a climbing accident, it was discovered that the body was in fact 4,000 years old. Named Ötzi after the location in which he was discovered, the Ötztal Valley, some years later rumblings of a curse began to emerge and a series of mysterious deaths seemed to add weight to these fears.

In 2004 Helmut Simon – the 67-year-old climber who had first discovered Ötzi – disappeared while climbing in the same area where he had first discovered the iceman. His body was found and he'd most likely fallen during a blizzard. An hour after his funeral the leader of the team dispatched to find him suffered a heart attack and died. Konrad Spindler, who had spearheaded the investigation and often joked whether he would be the next victim, died of complications from multiple sclerosis. More deaths were to follow: the head of the forensic team Rainer Henn died in a car crash and the journalist who'd filmed the excavation, Rainer Hoelzl, died of a brain tumour. Perhaps most bizarrely, Kurt Fritz – the mountain guide who led them to the mummy – was the only one of his party to be killed during an avalanche. Seven deaths in total were linked to the 'curse'.

The stories surrounding Ötzi are a fascinating example of a contemporary curse narrative. "That's a very current story," Luckhurst explains. "Lots of tabloids still follow the trail of the dead that come out of the discovery of Ötzi. In a way it's doing similar cultural work that mummy curse narratives have in the 19th century."



AFTER A SERIES OF TERRIBLE NIGHTMARES HE INSISTED THAT THE MUMMY HAD TO BE MOVED FROM HIS HOUSE

LA DOMENICA DEL CORRIERE

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La luce finalmente nelle tenebre tritillenarie di Tutankamen.
La scena culminante degli scavi di Luxor: il primo sguardo nel sontuoso sarcofago del re egizio.

of ever-growing interest and stories of supernatural happenings naturally led to speculation when a number of deaths began to occur. The first rumblings of the curse started in March 1923 when Lord Carnarvon's health began to decline. Novelist Marie Corelli noted in *The Express*: "I cannot but think that some risks are run by breaking into the last rest of a king of Egypt," and questioned: "Was it a mosquito bite that has so seriously infected Lord Carnarvon?" His death a few days later caused a sensation and the public pointed to Corelli's prediction. The events surrounding his death were very quickly embellished. His pet bird was said to have been eaten by a snake, all the lights in Cairo purportedly went out and in England his dog, Susie, let out one final howl before promptly dying at the exact moment as her master. Conan Doyle soon got in on the act and proclaimed that "evil spirits" could have been behind Carnarvon's death.

Only six of the 26 present during the tomb's opening died within the next decade. In fact, the most obvious target of any 'curse', Howard Carter, survived for another 20 years, passing away on the 2 March 1939. However, despite this a link was found to any death that could be even tenuously connected to the 'curse'. Two of Carnavorn's half brothers died within six months of each other. A year later a murder scandal was even suggested to have been the work of the boy king's vengeance, when Prince Ali Kamel Fahmy Bey was shot by his wife Marguerite after they had visited the tomb. The narrative of the curse continued even decades later; during the 1970s a policeman in New York who was tasked with guarding the objects during a tour claimed he suffered a stroke. Even the deaths of some of the flight crew who brought the exhibition to London in 1972 were blamed on the curse.

It's little wonder that in 1932 Universal Studios turned to the land of the pharaohs as a vehicle for their new horror-star, Boris Karloff. In 1931 the studio had scored a surprise hit with their version of *Dracula* starring Bela Lugosi. Keen to capitalise on this success they produced in the same year a version of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, with a then-unknown Karloff under heavy makeup playing the monster. As audiences seemed to have an appetite for horrific material, new tales of terror were in demand and the notion of Egypt as a mysterious and exotic land filled with curses led to *The Mummy* (1932). Unlike later film versions, this version is in fact more a loose retelling of *Dracula*, with the bandaged fiend's screen time kept to a minimum. However, this film, as well as subsequent versions of the tale, would make sure that the story of 'the mummy's curse' lived on and grew into a popular piece of horror folklore.

Of course, an important aspect when discussing curse narratives surrounding mummies is the ethical and moral questions involved. "I really want to encourage people to continue to visit museums, to go and see these mummies on display, but think before taking photographs of them," says Bruce. "It needs to be remembered that the majority of mummies were taken illegally and the British exploited their colonialistic position in Egypt, and, as a result, took advantage of the Egyptian people. I really want people to see mummies for themselves but understand that these are human remains and not a commodity."

Is it any wonder then, that during the period when ancient tombs were being raided and human remains displayed in people's homes or sold as trinkets, that stories of curses were rife? Perhaps deep down, these stories of spectral revenge from beyond the tomb were in fact a recognition of guilt.

ABOVE Howard Carter examining the sarcophagus of Tutankhamun during the discovery of the tomb in 1922

ABOVE-INSET An illustration of Carter and his team looking upon Tutankhamun's sarcophagus for the first time

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

THE LIFE OF SOJOURNER TRUTH

Meet the African American woman who escaped slavery and became an abolitionist, women's rights activist, orator, author and preacher

Written by Arisa Loomba

Sojourner Truth (1797 – 1883) was born enslaved in the Hudson River Valley in New York. She was named Isabella Baumfree, daughter of Elizabeth and James Baumfree, in the Low Dutch community that populated the region. It is little known that Isabella was actually a native Dutch speaker who knew no English until the age of nine. After being forced to learn English, she nonetheless continued to speak the language with a marked Dutch accent for the rest of her life. Isabella had heard that her mother had had 13 children, but she hardly knew any of them, as most of her siblings had either been sold away before she was born or in her infancy before she could remember. Her family, particularly her mother, lived in great terror of this constant separation and loss.

When Isabella was aged nine, her master died and her family was separated once more. Her ill and ageing mother and father were granted freedom following a lifetime of work. Meanwhile Isabella was sold at an auction with a flock of sheep for $100. By the age of 13 she had been sold and moved around a total of three times and had had four owners. These were hard years for Isabella. The first of these owners, Neely, beat her cruelly with rods and she was often punished for not understanding instructions and commands in English. In 1808 she was sold by Neely to a tavern keeper, Martinus Schryver, for $105, and then sold again in 1810 to a man called John Dumont. He enacted great cruelty against Isabella, raping her repeatedly and almost certainly fathering at least one of her children. When she was 18, Isabella fell in love with an enslaved man named Robert, who lived on a nearby farm. They were forbidden from meeting or having a relationship because their owners wished their slaves to have children with other slaves on the plantation, so there would be no ownership disputes over their offspring. Robert was finally caught on a visit to Isabella, and was beaten so terribly that this traumatic experience haunted Isabella forever. She never saw Robert again, and heard a few years later that he had died. Made to leave behind her love, Isabella was forced to marry a man on her own farm, called Thomas. She went on to have five children named James, Diana, Peter, Elizabeth and Sophia. Dumont's attention on Isabella caused great tension between Isabella and his wife Elizabeth, who was incredibly jealous. This was a common dynamic in slave societies, where enslaved women were subjected to a double oppression, not only to rape and abuse by their masters but also subsequent harassment and cruelty from their mistresses who resented them, believing that black women had willingly enticed their husbands.

Meanwhile, the state of New York was headed towards abolishing slavery. Dumont promised Isabella that she would be granted freedom early, on 4 July 1826, if she worked hard and faithfully for a year. When the day came, though, Dumont changed his mind, and would not let Isabella be free. Devastated, she decided to work well until the end of the harvest, and then find a way to escape. In late 1826, she walked away from the farm

All images © Alamy, © Getty Images

in broad daylight, taking her infant daughter Sophia with her. She felt she had no choice but to make the gut-wrenching decision to leave behind her other children.

Once safely away, she realised she had no plan or options for where to go to start a new life. She came across the home of the Quaker couple Isaac and Maria van Wagenen, who took her in and offered her safety and refuge. It was not long before Dumont found her, but she refused to return nor give up little Sophia. To save her, the Van Wagenen bought Isabella and Sophia from Dumont for $25 with the promise of freeing them later. Isabella had successfully freed herself from the clutches of Dumont.

However, her fight with the institution of slavery was not over. She soon found out that after the New York Anti-Slavery Law had passed, Dumont illegally sold Isabella's five-year-old son Peter and sent him south to Alabama to remain a slave in unknown conditions. Isabella was distraught. The Van Wagenens helped her to protest this move, and she filed a lawsuit to get Peter back using the name Isabella van Wagenen. Eventually, she won the case and regained custody of her young son. This was historic. Isabella was one of the fist black women to sue a white man and actually win.

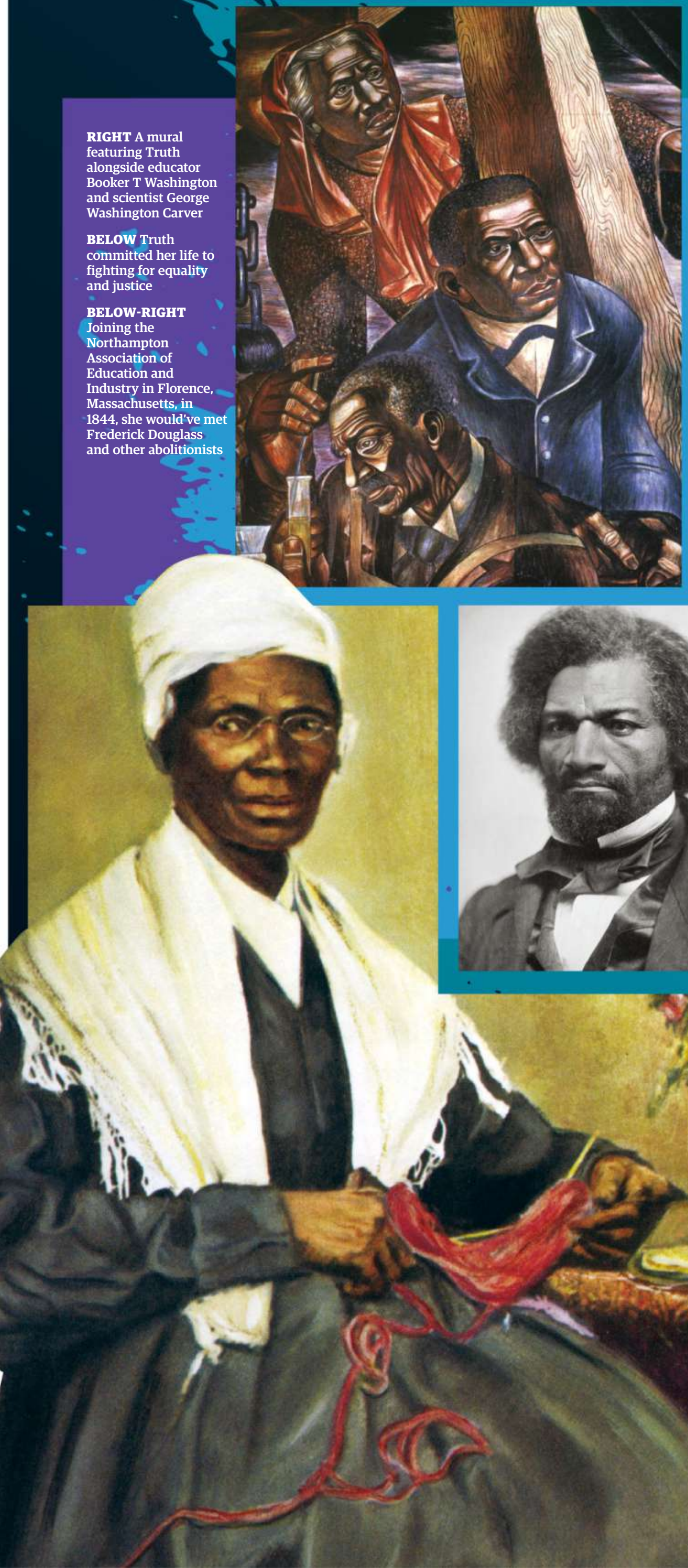
Revelations

Isabella's life took a profound change when she met the Van Wagenens and began to associate in their religious circles with Quakers and other kinds of Christians, like Pentecostals. In their company, she became a fervent Christian. In 1829 she moved with Peter to New York to work as a housekeeper for the Evangelist preacher Elijah Pierson, and then later for another preacher

> "Truth raised many questions about why black women were not seen as women"

Robert Matthews, or, as he called himself, Prophet Matthias. He ran the Westchester County Commune, also known as his 'kingdom', which was in many ways an enclosed utopic religious community. Isabella lived and worked in the kingdom from 1832 to 1835. Like thousands of slaves and Black people at the time, she was swept up in the wave of religious enthusiasm and revivalism. Community was very important to people like Isabella, people whose lives and families had been ripped apart and isolated. Slavery constantly destroyed family ties and blood ties, and community had to be made where it could. But it is hard to know exactly what Isabella's religious views were, and the extent to which she agreed with Matthias' teachings and his extreme views, which included a vehement hatred and disregard for women. The 'kingdom' became conflict-ridden and quickly scattered, with murder threats and betrayal abounding.

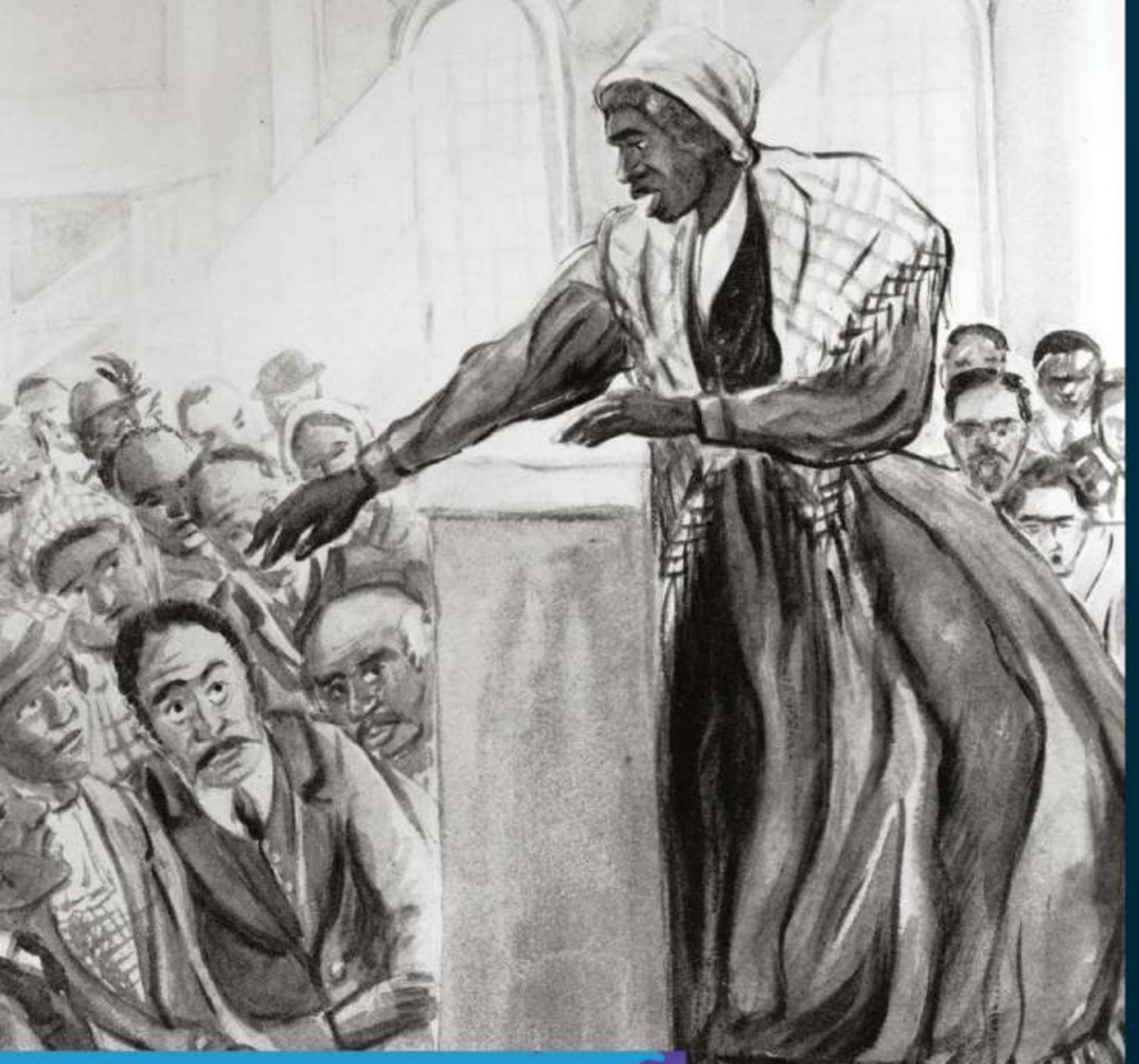
After the breakup of the 'kingdom', she continued to do housework in New York City. In 1843, though, her life changed forever. Isabella had what she described as a spiritual encounter with God, feeling that it was her calling and obligation to embark on a journey to preach the gospel and speak out against slavery. She felt called to change her name to Sojourner Truth. A sojourner is someone who travels around and she made it her mission to go from place to place, spreading the truth. She said that in changing

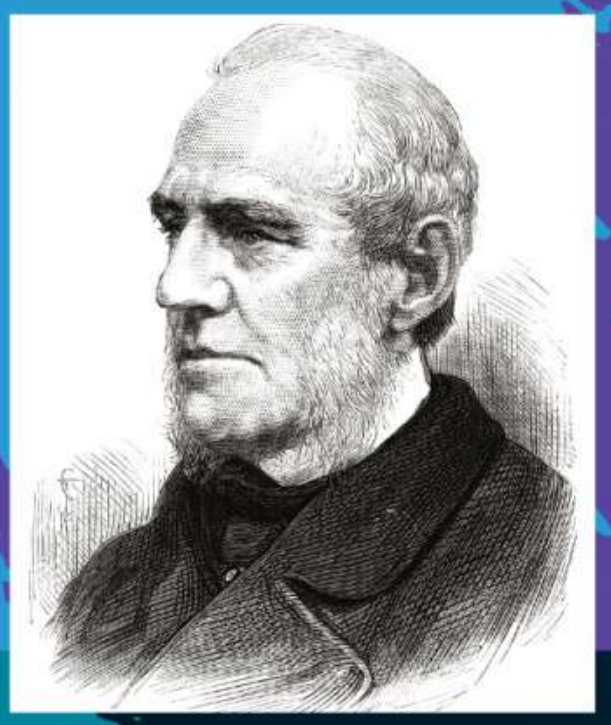


RIGHT A mural featuring Truth alongside educator Booker T Washington and scientist George Washington Carver

BELOW Truth committed her life to fighting for equality and justice

BELOW-RIGHT Joining the Northampton Association of Education and Industry in Florence, Massachusetts, in 1844, she would've met Frederick Douglass and other abolitionists





ABOVE
Truth giving her famous 'Ain't I A Woman?' speech

LEFT George Thompson was an abolitionist speaker who invited Truth to join him on a lecture tour in 1851

her name, giving herself an identity that was purely hers, no longer connected to the slave girl and her master's name, made her finally feel totally liberated.

Ain't I a Woman?

In 1851, Truth gave a rousing and captivating speech at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio. In this speech, Truth raised many questions about why Black women were not seen as women, in the same way as white women. Black women were not seen as women because under slavery, as bound workers, they were forced to be strong, muscular, hardy, brave and independent. They were not able to fulfil the demands of 19th century womanhood, such as femininity, delicacy, purity, piety, vulnerability and so on. Therefore, they lacked the comparative 'privileges' held by Black men, and white women. Truth showed the muscles in her arms and the many ways that she was just as strong if not stronger than a man, yet treated worse than a woman. She demanded the opportunity for womankind to have its chance in the world. Her rhetoric was powerful and arresting, and captivated a wide audience, including white women's rights activists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B Anthony.

Truth never learned to read or write, and we have no record of how she wished this speech to be remembered, or of the message she wished to get across. A few weeks after the speech, a 'transcription' was published in the *Anti-Slavery Bugle* by Marius Robinson that was apparently approved and looked over by Truth herself. However, 12 years later, Frances Gage, a white abolitionist and the President of the Ohio Women's Rights Convention, published a very different account of the speech. It was this version that became famous.

In Gage's version, Truth repeatedly asked the question: "Ain't I a woman?" throughout the speech, capturing the essence of her complaints as she tried to expand the definition of womanhood. This simple question has become a catchphrase used by activists the world over. But Robinson's version never included this question, and it is likely she never even said it. Gage's version of the speech is also written in a Southern African American dialect, which is curious given that Truth was from New York, not the South, and is known to have spoken with a Dutch accent all her life. Robinson's version presents Truth as more forceful and matter of fact, whilst Gage's version is more polite and respectful

When Truth met Honest Abe

Conflicting accounts leave unanswered questions

On 29 October 1864, Sojourner Truth attended the White House for an audience with President Abraham Lincoln, just shy of two years since his Emancipation Proclamation. In Truth's own account of the meeting, which she attended with a white friend, Lucy Colman, Lincoln was taking several meetings, some with African Americans, with whom he gave "much kindness and consideration." He comes across as modest with regards to his Emancipation Proclamation and the meeting ends with him showing her a Bible presented to him by representatives of the Black population of Baltimore.

Colman, however, recalled things a little differently according to Nell Irvin Painter, writing years later. She reveals they waited three hours to meet the president and claimed the mood changed when he was presented with Truth and another African American woman. He called her "Aunty", which Colman took to be a demeaning nickname, and was more dismissive than humble regarding Truth's praise of his work on abolition. That being said, Margaret Washington points out in her book *Sojourner Truth's America* that Colman was not a supporter of Lincoln and her account had changed in the years since the meeting. She also indicates that the word 'Aunt' or 'Aunty' was thought to be a term of endearment for many abolitionists, so was possibly not intended or received as condescending.

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LEFT Truth recruited for the Union Army in the Civil War and her grandson, James Caldwell, fought in the 54th Massachusetts Regiment

BELOW This monument of Truth, created by artist Tina Allen, was dedicated in 1999

All images: © Alamy

of her white audience. But Gage's version of the speech is more lively, dynamic and humorous than Robinson's, and is the version that most people know and think of when they think of Sojourner Truth. It is now a central text in the canon of American women's activism. And yet we have no confirmation that Gage's version has any accuracy and was not just written through the lens of her embellished memories of the day.

The difference between the two versions shows the problems with trying to study history, and how reliant we are on the preservation of written documents. When the person in question is illiterate or has not left behind any surviving documents, we are very limited in what we are able to know about them. Often, we are limited to just what other people wrote about them at the time, but this is often wrong, or biased, or incomplete. Apart from other people writing down what they remember of her speeches, all we have is the autobiography that Truth dictated to Olive Gilbert in 1850. It was published as *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*. It is a very important document, but once again Truth's words are obscured through someone else's pen. We have no access to her authentic voice. She also utilised new technologies and had 14 photographic portraits taken of herself. It is clear that in these photographs, Truth made an effort to appear sedate, calm and collected, feminine and domestic so as to be relatable and acceptable as a woman. This persona was much more marketable than being a strong and empowered Black woman.

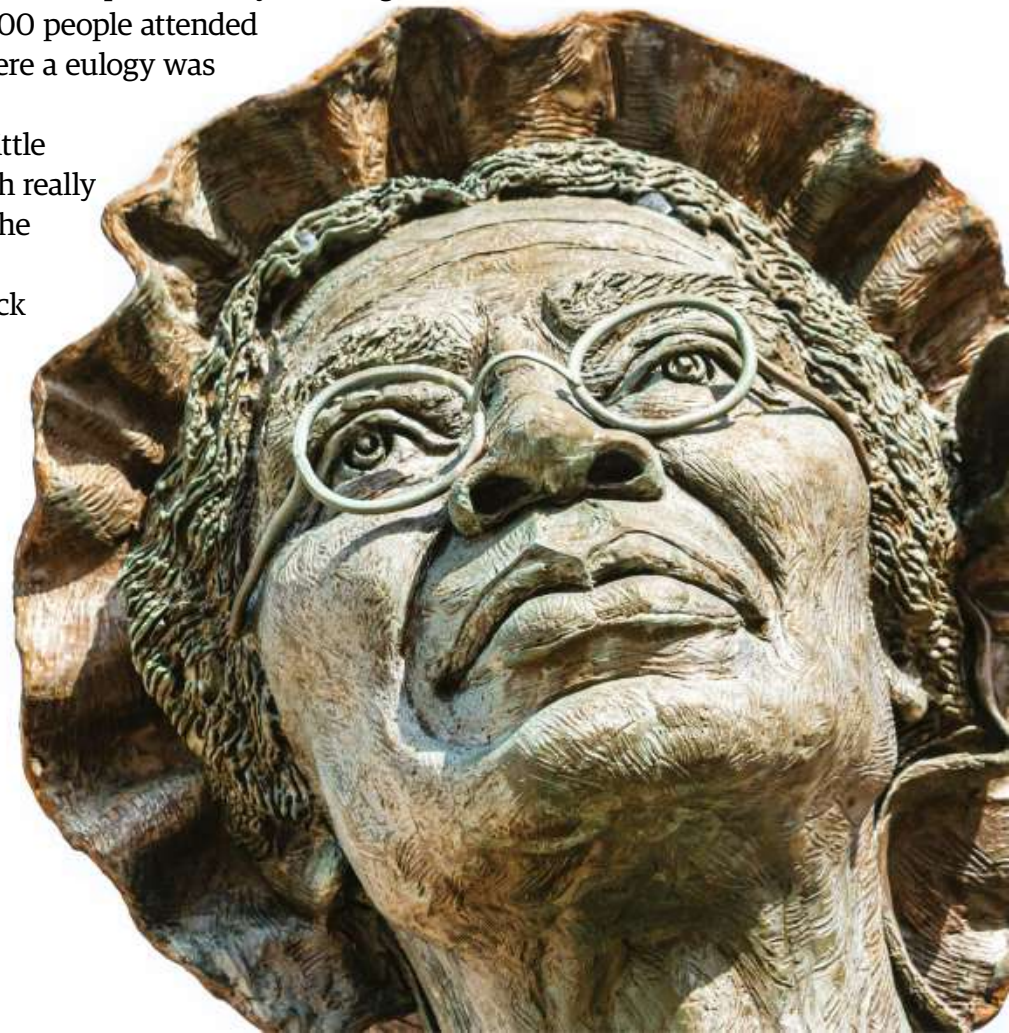
This is why it is so hard to know very much about the lives of so many enslaved black people and people of colour who lived in oral cultures, could not read or write, or did not have access to education. It is also the reason we so often read history from the perspective of the rich, the victors, the privileged, the oppressors. Many historians today are trying to find ways to uncover the voices of those who could not speak for themselves in archives.

Death and Legacy

During the Civil War (1861-65), Truth continued to travel and speak. She also helped to recruit Black soldiers alongside other ex-enslaved women like Harriet Tubman. She worked in Washington DC for the National Freedman's Relief Association, where she rallied people to donate food, clothes and other supplies to support and uplift Black refugees fleeing the South in search of freedom. Her work earned her recognition from President Abraham Lincoln himself. She challenged segregation laws alongside activists William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass, and campaigned for women's suffrage with Stanton and Anthony. However, she felt isolated by both movements, feeling that neither truly respected nor encapsulated the unique plight of Black women.

Despite her increasing renown across the US, Truth never became particularly wealthy and was never able to give up working as household help. She also relied on donations and the proceeds from her autobiography. After the war, in search of a quieter life, she moved to Battle Creek, Michigan, to join some of her daughters. She did not cease speaking out against discrimination and for women's suffrage. Nearly blind and deaf in the last years of her life, she passed away at the age of 86 at home. Almost 1,000 people attended her funeral service, where a eulogy was given by Douglass.

Though we have so little knowledge of who Truth really was in her own mind, she continues to stand as a powerful symbol of Black and women's freedom, the oratory tradition, and the agency of the individual to change people's lives. It is also important not to forget about little Isabella Baumfree, the girl from New York determined to be rid of the traumas of her youth and build a new life.



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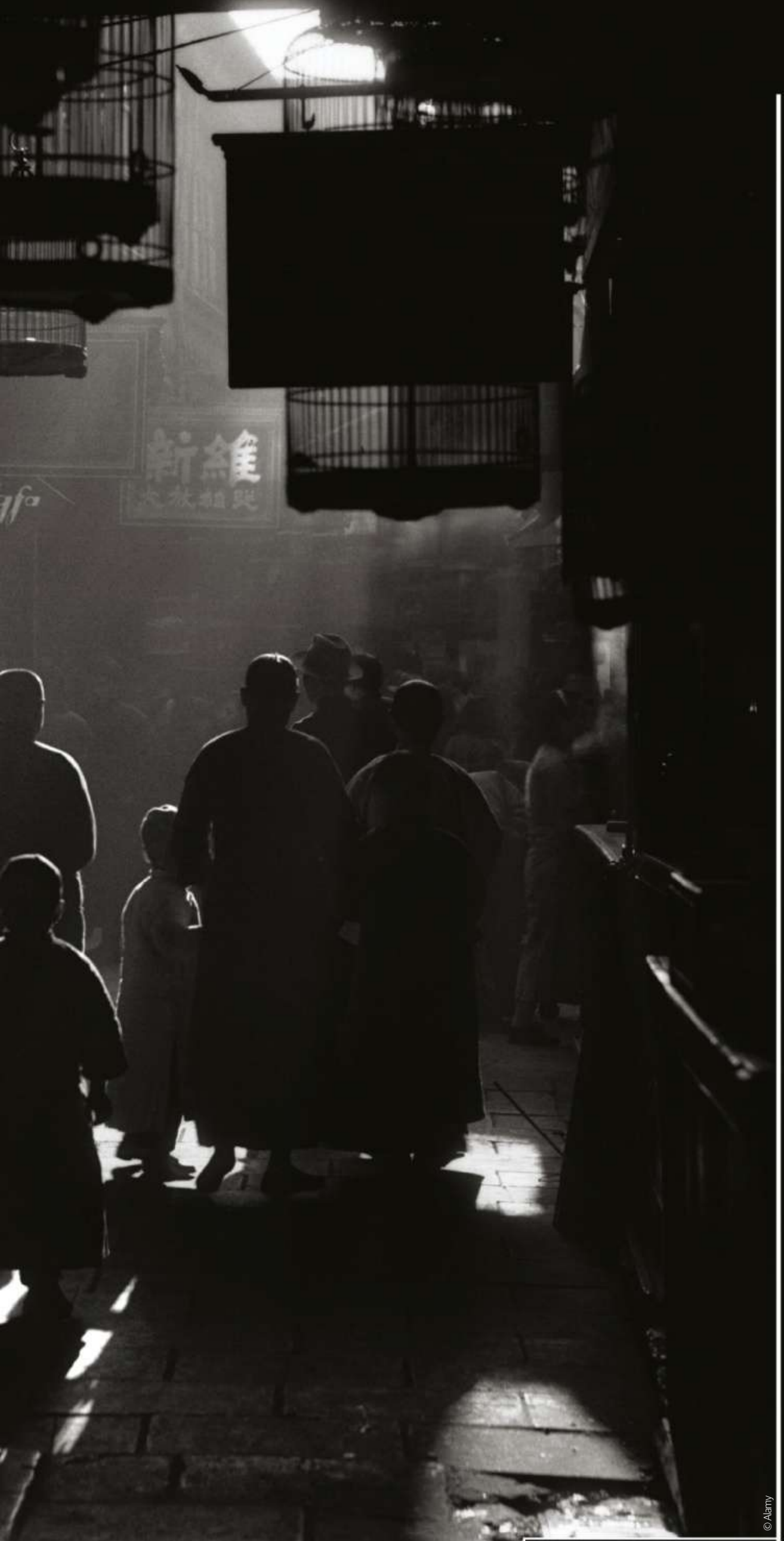
THE OPIUM KING IN THE CITY OF SIN

Who was the man who struck fear into the hearts of the people of Shanghai?

Written by Paul French



© Alamy

A guidebook from mid-1930s said of the nightlife: "The little alley which a few hours before was picturesque and atmospheric becomes sordid and ugly"

Between the two world wars, adventurers, gunrunners, criminals, gangsters and opium dealers clustered in the international city that was both part of a warlord-wracked China and yet separate – split into an International Settlement run largely by the British and Americans and a French Concession. "To control Shanghai was to dominate all of China," said the China Hands of the 1930s, and to control Shanghai was to control the flow of opium.

FROM WHARF RAT TO ZONGSHI

Du Yuesheng was the unchallenged leader of Shanghai's Green Gang, a criminal syndicate whose tentacles extended to the Mafia in America and the criminal gangs of Europe, as well as throughout every Chinatown in Asia. And it was all down to a one-time 'wharf rat' called Yuesheng – known to everyone as 'Big-eared Du'.

Shanghai's Green Gang was originally formed of the Yangtze River boatmen who combined to smuggle grain and salt before graduating to piracy and raiding unprotected riverside villages. As they profited, they became attracted to the growing metropolis of Shanghai. There they moved into the opium business. Du was an orphan from the settlement of Gaoqiao, near Shanghai. He soon left the poverty-stricken village and got a job with a greengrocer in the city – a grocer who dealt opium on the side. He moved up from that to acting as a bodyguard in a brothel, then being a 'boat', a bookie's runner taking lottery bets from Chinese teahouses to the gangsters who ran the city's largest gambling houses. From there he rose to run a gang that hijacked opium shipments brought into the city and so, inevitably, became initiated into the Green Gang. He was barely 16 years of age.

Du became close – he was almost an adopted son – to Huang Jinrong, known as 'Pockmarked Huang', who combined being a gangster with being the head of the French Concession's detective division. Du became Huang's gambling and opium enforcer. He began to live the life of a true Shanghai gangster – he dressed in Chinese silks and was surrounded by White Russian bodyguards who'd trained in the Tsar's army only to flee to Shanghai after the Bolshevik Revolution. By his mid-20s, Du had a colonial-style mansion in the city's Frenchtown, four legal wives, six sons and perhaps as many as a dozen concubines. The profits from the opium trade had provided him with a bulletproof western car and a growing string of opium dens, brothels, casinos and sing-song houses.

Then, in 1924, Huang was arrested. Du pulled strings and got him released, but after that Pockmarked Huang was finished, his reign as Shanghai's supreme mob boss over. Du took control and was proclaimed the city's 'Zongshi', or 'grandmaster'. He was now China's largest opium dealer, reputedly with the French authorities in his pocket through the payment of massive bribes. He also became one of the city's biggest opium addicts, an addiction that fuelled his penchant for superstition. To protect him from his enemies he had three small monkey heads, imported from Hong Kong, sewn to his clothes at the small of his back. They watched his back while Du pushed the Green Gang ever forward.

DOING THE FOREIGNERS' DIRTY WORK

Who really controlled inter-war Shanghai was a contested issue. The British and Americans ran the International Settlement with their own police, justice system and governing council; the French Concession was run by their colonial administrators with the support of Vietnamese troops from French Indo-China. Most of the rest of China was run by the Kuomintang

(Nationalist) government headed by General Chiang Kai-shek. Du, who thought of himself as a 'Confucian conservative', made an alliance with Chiang against the growing power of communism.

In 1927 things came to a bloody climax on the streets of Shanghai. Du's Green Gang would face down, and ultimately slaughter, the forces of the political left in the city. With the French authorities bought off and the communists defeated, Du knew that Chiang would finally leave the Green Gang alone to run the city and its globally reaching opium trade.

On 12 April 1927, however, things got nasty. Chiang had asked Du to form and control a general workers union to oppose the communists, who had called a general strike in the city. The foreign authorities, fearing how much the strike was costing them and losing the city to the communists, stood back and allowed the Green Gang free rein. Chiang's forces moved to the outskirts of Shanghai to fight the communists, but in the city itself, where his army could not penetrate the foreign concessions, the Green Gang went to work with teams of street thugs and sniper units under Du's personal command. Just what the death toll was that day is still cause for debate – some say 1,000, other reports say 3,000.

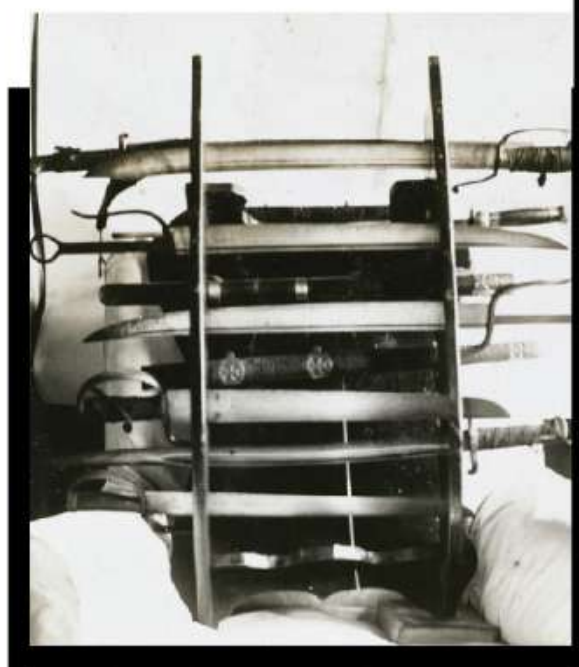
Du himself was not without blood on his own hands. He invited the leader of the Red Unions, Wang Shouhua, to dinner at his Rue Wagner mansion. Wang did not notice the extra White Russian guards on duty or the extra cars parked at the back of the property. As the unsuspecting Wang entered the mansion, Du's henchmen grabbed him and began to beat and strangle him. Du came down his wide staircase and told them to finish him. Wang was taken in the back of a Green Gang car to the suburbs of the city, wrapped in a hessian sack and buried alive. The communist-led General Strike was finished in Shanghai. A grateful Chiang appointed Du president of China's Opium Suppression Bureau.

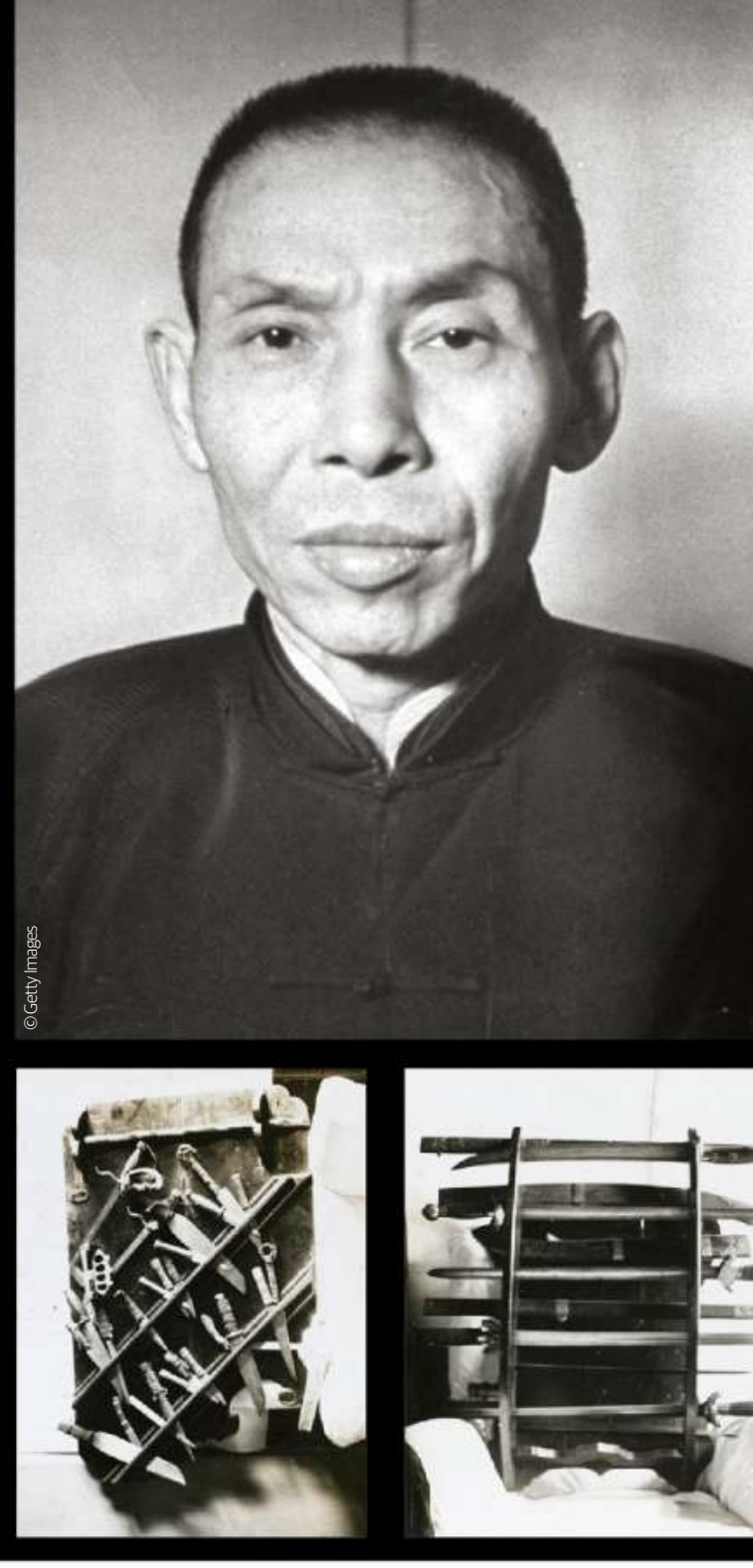
Du and the Green Gang came to officially control the whole of China's opium trade. His only opponents were the men of the French Concession's government, ordered by their political masters in Paris to bring their largest colonial city in the Far East under control. It was the biggest concerted attack on the power of Du and the Green Gang since he had become Zongshi.

THE FATEFUL DINNER PARTY

Rumours of corruption, especially among the Garde Municipal police force charged with controlling Frenchtown, were rife. Succumbing to the pressure back home, the top official in Shanghai, Captain Fiori, announced that a "crusade" would be waged against the Green Gang's operation in the Concession. But Fiori was irredeemably corrupt – ten small-time casinos were closed; none of the Green Gang's were touched. Eventually the French military attempted to bring order by declaring martial law in the French Concession but still Du's casinos and opium dens stayed open. Eventually Paris decided to replace both the consul-general and the chief of police. But, as far as Du was concerned, the damage had been done – they had dared to challenge his exclusive authority.

After a tense winter Du pretended to offer an olive branch to the Frenchtown officials, using the excuse of a visit to Shanghai by a director of the Citroën car company. In mid-February he invited the visiting Frenchman, along with the men behind the attempted crackdown on his illicit operations, to lunch at his Rue Wagner mansion. Within a few days, four of the men present were dead from poisoning while Captain Fiori, though falling extremely ill, survived and promptly fled Shanghai to live out his days at a villa near Nice. Paris never again ordered a concerted crackdown on the Green Gang in Shanghai.





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Images courtesy of Historical Photographs of China

TOP-RIGHT Du Yuesheng at some point in the 1940s. From 1924 onwards he controlled Shanghai's opium racket as the head of the Green Gang

ABOVE Pictured in 1927, these weapons were confiscated by the Shanghai Municipal Police. They are testimony of the violence of the city's underworld

Bystanders rush across North Chekiang Road, Shanghai, during the chaos of 1927. When the Chinese Civil War arrived in Shanghai, the gangs joined the fight

Image courtesy of Historical Photographs of China

THE OPIUM BOOM

By the 1930s, the Green Gang was supreme and the French Concession was their playground. Within the gang nobody challenged Du. They were phenomenally wealthy as Shanghai's economy boomed and it emerged as the greatest 'Sin City' of Asia. But it was to get even better – in 1933 America finally scrapped its disastrous experiment with prohibition. As the breweries and distilleries got back to work, the organised crime gangs that had made vast profits bootlegging looked for the next big thing. The answer was dope – opium – and the single biggest source of opium was China. The majority of that source was controlled by Du: it was time to go international.

New York Mob boss Little Louis 'Lepke' Buchalter sent his top procurement man, Jacob 'Yasha' Katzenberg. He hit Shanghai in

OPIUM DEALER TO THE WORLD

How China's City of Sin kept the world high

FROM THE BOONIES
The opium came from the wild west of China – the rural, lightly policed provinces where the grip of China's unstable government was weak. The vast majority of it was transported through Wuhan, a port city on the banks of the Yangtze, which like Shanghai once bustled with many foreign 'concessions'.
UP RIVER
From Wuhan, the opium was transported up the Yangtze River and – through Shanghai and the Green Gang – the open sea. This was core to Shanghai's role in the drug trade and the Green Gang's supremacy.
TO PANAMA TO LOS ANGELES
From Shanghai, the opium either went direct to LA or, via the Panama Canal, to New York. Both of these routes involved prominent mob syndicates and high-profile gangland heavyweights like Louis 'Lepke' Buchalter and Meyer Lansky.
TO JAPAN
TO EUROPE
With a huge crackdown on overland opium routes through Turkey, Corsican gangs in the French port of Marseilles concentrated on Shanghai, either transporting their crop directly through the Suez Canal or indirectly through French Indochina (now Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos). From here, Corsican mobsters such as Paul Carbone and Francois Spirito distributed it throughout Europe.
TO SINGAPORE AND MALAYA
TO THE PHILIPPINES
MANCHURIA
SHANGHAI
LUZON

Map source: Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division

early 1935, looking to buy dope and heroin pills for shipment to Buchalter's processing plant in Brooklyn. The criminal bosses of Shanghai struck a deal with the criminal bosses of New York – six shipments of opium were dispatched from the Port of Shanghai to America between December 1935 and February 1937, earning each side 10 million dollars.

However, by early 1937 Buchalter was on the lam from Treasury Agents in the US with a $5,000 bounty on his head. America's Treasury Agent based in Shanghai, Martin 'Nick' Nicholson, had an indictment against him, in absentia, in Federal Court on conspiracy to smuggle Shanghai heroin into the US. Buchalter was on the run, Katzenberg disappeared and their organisation started to fall apart. By mid-1937, Du was faced with a new and more ruthless challenge to his power in Shanghai: the Japanese Army.

AN ENEMY TOO STRONG

The beginning of the end for the Green Gang came on 14 August 1937. On that day, bombs rained down on Shanghai's International Settlement and French Concession as Japan launched its attack on the city and eastern China. Tokyo knew that to control Shanghai was to control the Yangtze, and that to control the Yangtze was to control all China's vast trade. That summer they poured in troops, gunboats and fighter planes, burned the Chinese portions of the city, surrounded the foreign concessions, then moved to conquer the rest of the Yantze River Delta.

Chiang and the Chinese government were forced to relocate 1,100km up the Yangtze to the foggy, mountainous city of Chongqing. It appeared China had lost the war. To stop the Japanese taking immediate control of his rackets, Du ordered his fleet of opium hulks on the city's Huangpu River scuttled. But Shanghai's legendary position as the greatest entrepôt port in the Orient was over. Du decided the game was up. He took his wealth and fled to British-controlled Hong Kong. The Green Gang fell apart, dispersing into minor gangs, none of which were strong enough to stand up to the Japanese occupation of the city.

Du Yuesheng, the last Zongshi of Shanghai, lived out his days in Hong Kong. Legend says the British government let him keep his fortune in return for retiring from all criminal activities. Rumour also has it that in 1951 he was planning to return to China to rebuild the Green Gang and once again fight the now-dominant Communist Party. Yet his years of opium addiction turned out to be too much.

Aged only 62, his last days were spent in Hong Kong. His body was reportedly taken by one of his wives to Taiwan, the island stronghold and refuge of a defeated Chiang. He is buried in Taipei, though many remain sceptical if his tomb actually contains his body.

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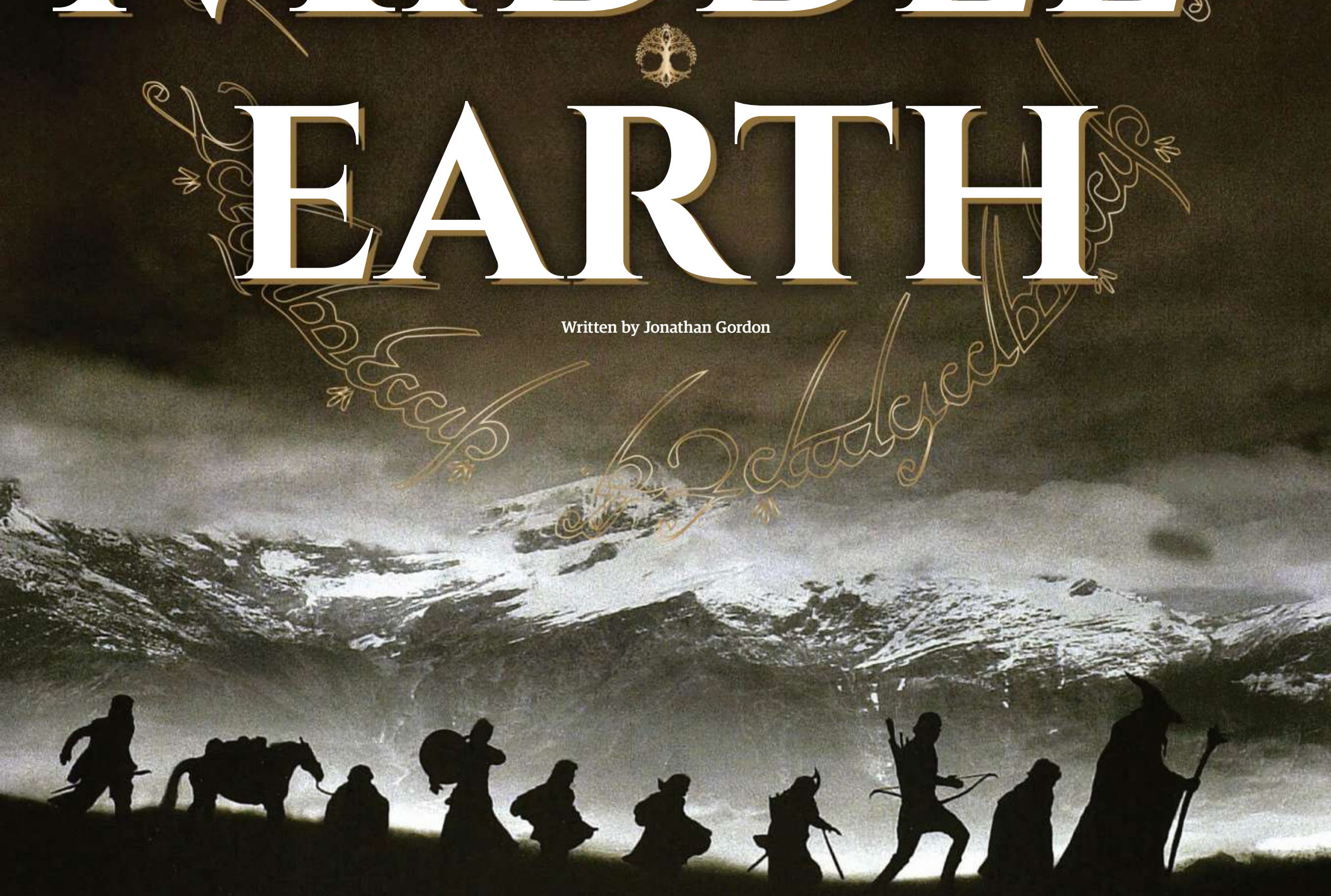
REAL CRIME: KILLER CASE FILES

History behind MIDDLE-EARTH

Written by Jonathan Gordon



Uncover the events, legends and people who inspired JRR Tolkien's *Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings*

"I am historically minded. Middle-earth is not an imaginary world"

- JRR Tolkien

The world of Middle-earth is the fictional setting of JRR Tolkien's celebrated works *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion*, but within its fiction are many elements of older, historic works. Tolkien was famously a passionate linguist, inventing a number of languages as he built his fantasy world, but he was also a medievalist and a lover of Anglo-Saxon, Germanic and Nordic mythology, all of which fed into his new creation. Just as the languages of Europe fed into Middle-earth, so too did the myths and history of Europe, from the ancient past, even up to his own time, as we'll explore in this feature. Tolkien soaked it all up and fed it back into his writing. Even the name, as Tolkien pointed out himself, was a modernisation of an Old English word, 'middel-erd', "an old word for the inhabited world of men, the oikouménē."

Beowulf

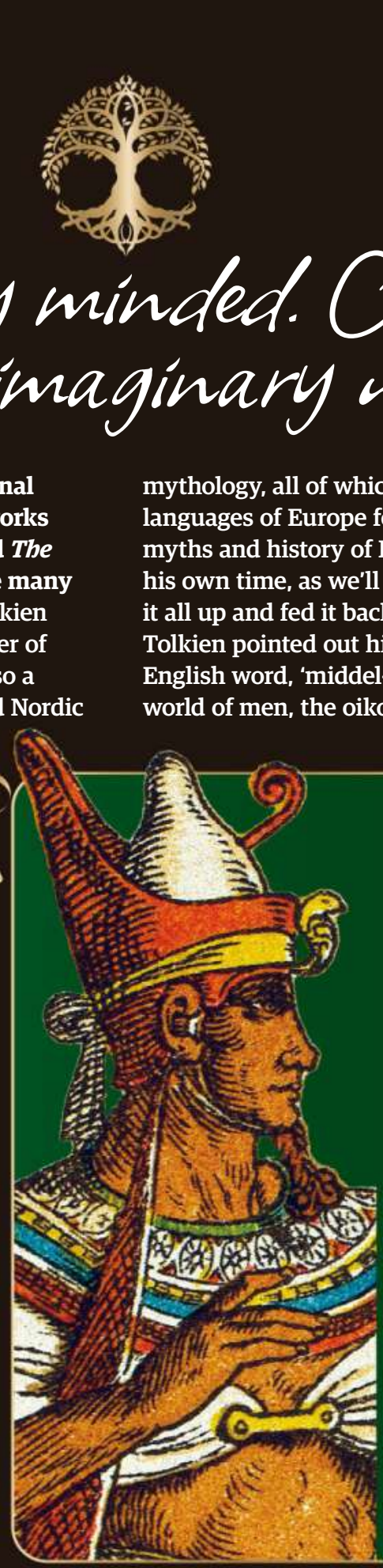
The Old English epic poem was a massive influence on Tolkien

c.1000 CE

Tolkien was a great admirer and defender of Beowulf, having first read it in its Old English form at King Edward's School growing up, according to Christopher A. Snyder in *The Making of Middle-earth*. In 1936 he gave a lecture entitled *Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*, in which he made the case for the epic poem as a literary work deserving of greater academic appreciation. Given his attachment to the tale, it should come as no surprise that many elements of the Beowulf adventure find counterparts in Middle-earth.

The influence is most apparent in the depiction of and interactions with Smaug in *The Hobbit*. As David Day points out in *An Encyclopedia of Tolkien*, a thief attempts to steal treasure from the dragon in Beowulf only for the beast to be awoken and attack a nearby community.

Elvenscript.wiki/ Ssolbergi



Ancient Egypt

A royal lineage for the realm of men

3000 BCE – 332 CE

If Middle-earth is a medieval world, it makes sense that its history draws from the ancient world. So it was that the human kingdom of Gondor harked back to Númenor, which Tolkien compared to the ancient Egyptians in a letter to Rhona Beare: "In many ways they resembled 'Egyptians' - the love of, and power to construct, the gigantic and massive. And in their great interest in ancestry and in tombs." Day highlights that Núméróreans, also called the Dúnedain, had a north and south kingdom that was ultimately unified, not unlike Upper and Lower Egypt. Tolkien even went so far as to sketch the double crown of Gondor, the new unified realm. It is not dissimilar from the pschent of the pharaohs, with the Hedjet Crown's tall design standing out.

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Homer and Ancient Greece

Classical stories helped build the history of this world

c.900-701 BCE

According to John Garth in *Tolkien and the Great War*, Tolkien credited Homer as one of his first literary loves. In some of the backstory to Middle-earth, you can see some of the influence such classic works had. Númenor, a once great and powerful nation of men, is destroyed and lost in a similar fashion to Atlantis in Homer's retelling, falling into the sea. Snyder also points to similarities between Bilbo's interaction with Smaug and the way Odysseus taunts the cyclops in *The Odyssey*. What's more, the High Elvish language of the books was described by Tolkien as 'Elven-Latin' taking its cues from Finnish and Greek.

All that is gold does not glitter, Not all those who wander are lost; The old that is strong does not wither, Deep roots are not reached by the frost. From the ashes a fire shall be woken, A light from the shadows shall spring; Renewed shall be blade that was broken, The crownless again shall be king"

Gawain and the Green Knight

A classic Arthurian story, translated by Tolkien

14th century

Tolkien worked with Leeds colleague EV Gordon in translating *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* in 1925, and this style of Middle English epic poetry was a huge influence on his writing style. The main point of comparison with his own writing, though, comes in the hero of the story. Only the young Gawain accepts the challenge of the Green Knight to Arthur's court and must go on a treacherous journey to fulfil his pledge. Likewise, Frodo steps up to take the One Ring to Mordor, and like Gawain doesn't fully live up to that promise in the end.

Snyder points out that the Mouth of Sauron also mimics the dismissive speech of the Green Knight when he approaches Aragorn and his forces at the gates of Mordor saying, "is there anyone in this rout with authority to treat with me?" compared to the knight's welcome, "where is the governor of this gang?"

The Song of Roland

A small battle involving Charlemagne turned into a romantic tragedy

c.1100

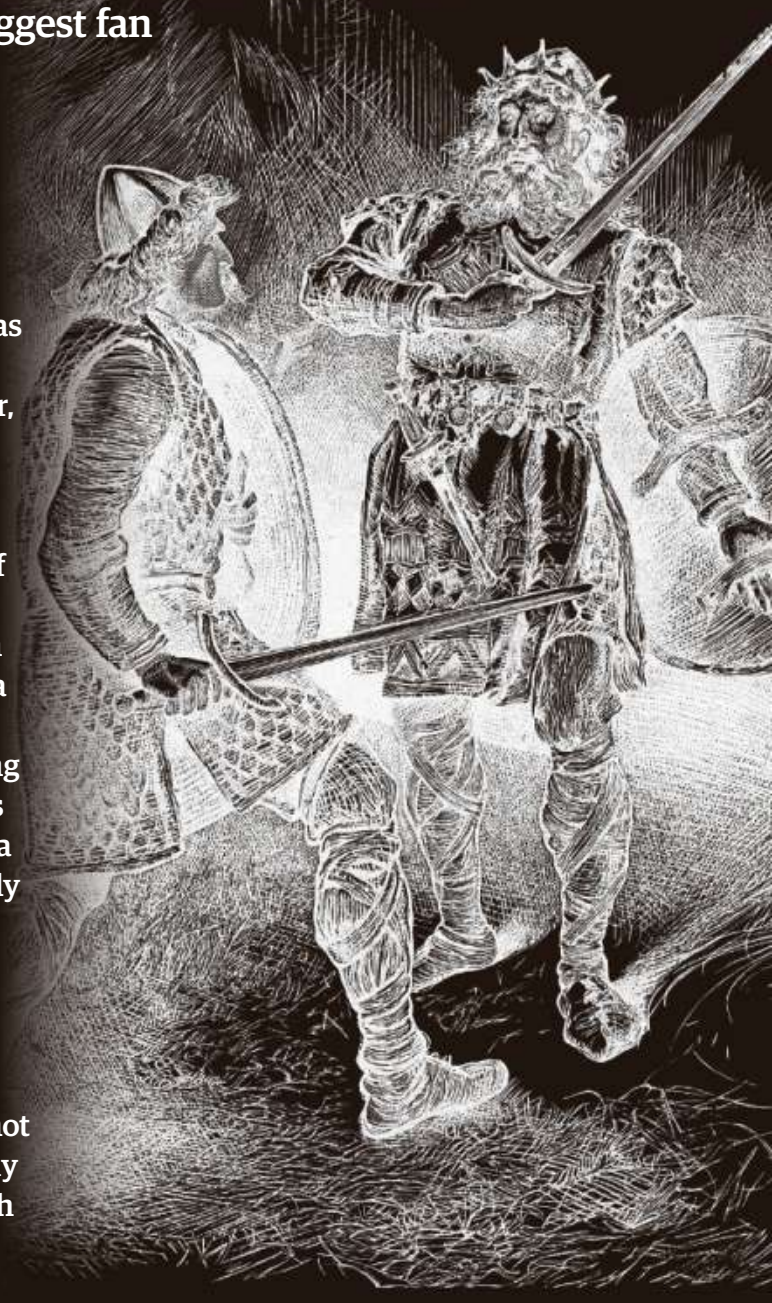
La Chanson de Roland (The Song of Roland) is a poem inspired in part by the real Battle of Roncesvalles in 778 CE, but retold as a battle against 'Saracens' in Spain with a more romantic subplot of jealousy and betrayal between step-father and son. The death of the titular hero Roland has a number of similarities to a similar scene at the end of *The Fellowship of the Ring* as Boromir is killed making a last, doomed stand against the enemy.

The key detail is described by Day: "As he dies, Roland blows his olifant (ivory hunting horn) to warn Charlemagne of the proximity of his foes. As Charlemagne hastens toward the pass, the Saracens flee, but the king is too late to save his liegeman," which isn't far off describing Boromir's death and Aragorn rushing to support him.

William Shakespeare

Tolkien was not the Bard's biggest fan

1564–1616



It might come as a surprise that Tolkien wasn't the greatest fan of Shakespeare, writing in 1944: "I have ever seen the folly of reading Shakespeare." The key word there was 'reading', since he enjoyed watching Shakespeare acted on stage. However, he blamed Shakespeare, in part, for minimising the concept of elves in fiction and appears to have taken issue with two important passages of *Macbeth*, which he 'improves' in *The Lord of the Rings*. Day quotes Tolkien as saying his March of the Ents was a reaction to his disappointment with the prophecy of Birnam Wood coming to Dunsinane Hill not involving trees actually moving. "I longed to devise a setting in which the trees might really march to war," he said. Similarly, the prophecy that none of woman born will kill Macbeth, ending in Macduff killing him since he was born by caesarian section, is tidied up for the Witch King, about whom it is said, "not by the hand of man shall he fall," only to be killed by Éowyn, a woman, with the help of Merry, a hobbit.

Viking Sagas

One of Tolkien's great passions and its impact on his work

c.1100–1200 CE

Tolkien taught Old Icelandic at the University of Leeds and cofounded the Viking Club, according to Snyder, where professors and students would drink and retell stories. The influence of these sagas is too great to list comprehensively, but we'll stick to the key crossover points. *The Poetic Edda*, a collection of tales from the 12th century, is probably the most important, since its dwarf names gave Tolkien names for his characters, including Gandálfr, becoming Gandalf, alongside more direct lifts like Dvalinn and Kíli.

Völsunga saga from the 13th century was a particular favourite of Tolkien's, according to Snyder. "Sigurd, like Bard in *The Hobbit*, is a hero who slays a dragon," he wrote. The story also includes a sword being reforged, much like Aragorn's, and a cursed ring.

Battle of the Somme

A personal experience of the Great War

1 July – 18 November 1916

Tolkien joined the army as a second lieutenant in the Lancashire Fusiliers and served at the Battle of the Somme. The Tolkien Society explains that four months in and out of the trenches led to him contracting 'Trench Fever' and being sent back to England in November 1916 to convalesce. It was during his time in hospital that he began writing more fantasy stories.

While Tolkien insisted his works weren't intended as allegory for either World War – in a foreword to *Lord of the Rings* he wrote, "I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations" – his experiences clearly colour his world. Snyder points to the Dead Marshes of *The Two Towers*, filled with the dead of a long-ago-fought battle, as being similar to the fields of unclaimed dead in Northern France. Meanwhile, Garth quotes Tolkien as revealing: "My 'Sam Gamgee' is indeed a reflection of the English soldier, of the privates and batmen I knew in the 1914 war."

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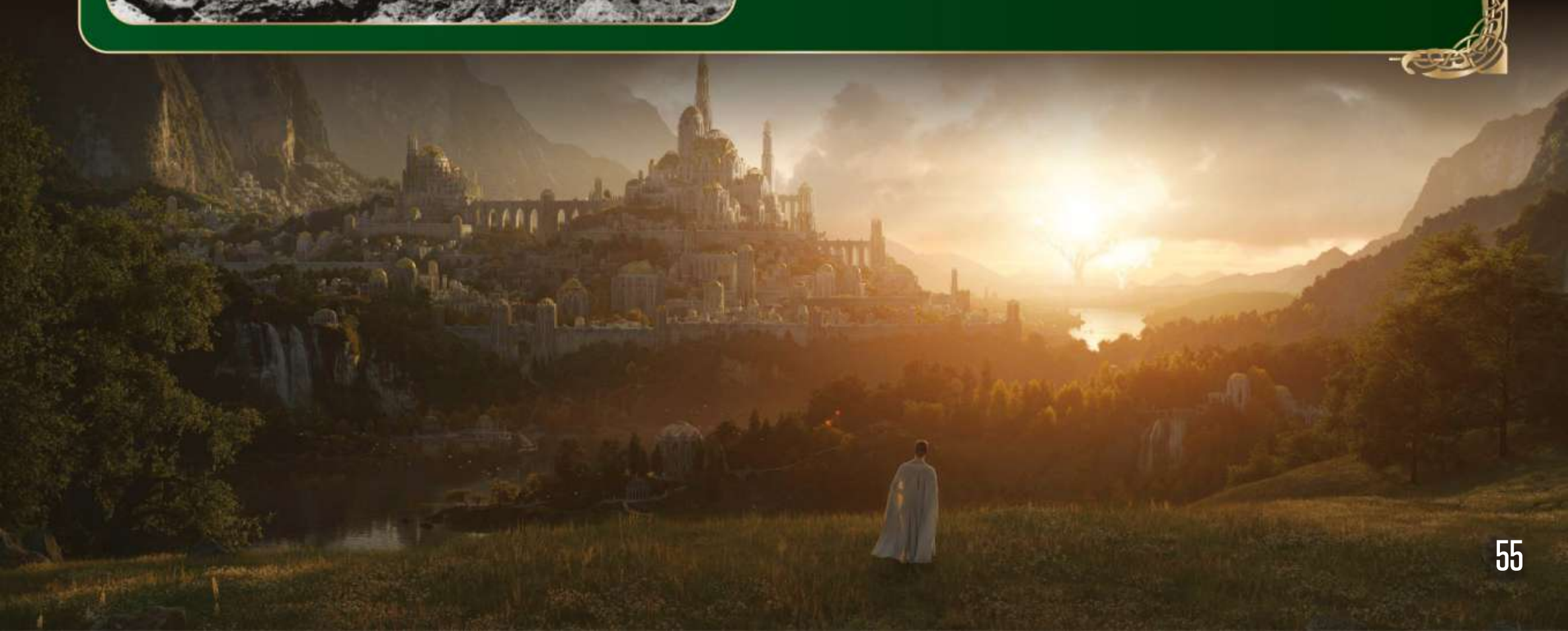


Delphi

The great sanctuary had its counterpart in Middle-earth

c.1450 BCE – 385 CE

When the hobbits of *The Lord of the Rings* need a safe place to take the One Ring to so that its fate can be decided, they head to Rivendell. For his reference, Tolkien could have picked no better location than Delphi in Greece, which UNESCO describes as "the religious centre and symbol of unity of the ancient Greek world." Much like the Greeks consulting the oracle at Delphi before embarking on a course of action, so the people of Middle-earth send representatives to Rivendell to discuss the return of Sauron. Day adds that there may be some linguistic links too. Delphi's root word was delphys, meaning womb or cleft in Greek, while Rivendell is known in some languages of the book as 'cleft valley' or 'deep cleft dale'.

Charlemagne

A unifying king who brought back a once-dead empire

747–814 CE

"Tolkien often pointed out the parallel between his hero Aragorn and the historic Charlemagne and their tasks of reconstructing lost or ruined empires," wrote Day. For Charlemagne that was recreating the Roman Empire with his Holy Roman Empire, while for Aragorn it's reunifying the realms of men under the leadership of Gondor. The systems of government are also similar, with kings ruling over their respective lands with a chief king, or emperor, at their head. Tolkien had Aragorn follow a similar path to Charlemagne, fighting off an invading force, creating new alliances and then building back what was lost. Middle-earth itself is supposed to line up with the European continent that Charlemagne controlled so much of. "The action of the story takes place in the northwest of 'Middle-earth', equivalent in latitude to the coastlands of Europe and the north shores of the Mediterranean," wrote Tolkien in notes to Charlotte and Denis Plimmer.

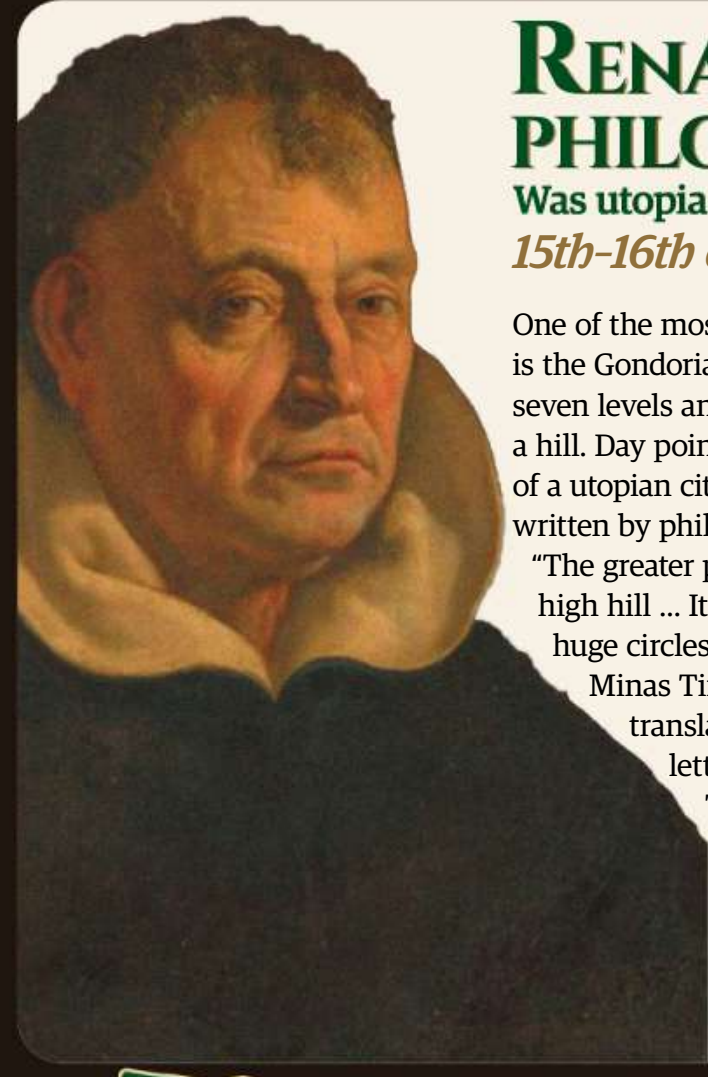
"You step into the Road, and if you don't keep your feet, there is no knowing where you might be swept off to"

Byzantine Empire

The remnants of a once-giant empire formed the basis for the human kingdoms

330–1453 CE

In *An Encyclopedia of Tolkien*, Day connects the kingdom of Gondor in Middle-earth with the Eastern Roman Empire, since it's the surviving realm of a once much larger empire with its northern base – comparable to the Western Roman Empire – lost and the new kingdom lasting about 1,000 years after as we join it in *The Lord of the Rings*. Snyder goes further, quoting Tolkien as describing Gondor as "a kind of proud, venerable, but increasingly impotent Byzantium." However, he also points out that Tolkien was not a great fan of Roman politics and had his sympathies much more towards the 'barbarians' of the era, "preferring a free Gaul and seeing good in Carthaginians," as Tolkien wrote in 1944.



Renaissance Philosophy

Was utopia hiding in Middle-earth?

15th–16th century

One of the most striking Middle-earth locations is the Gondorian capital of Minas Tirith, with its seven levels and gates around a tower, built into a hill. Day points to a very similar description of a utopian city known as the City of the Sun written by philosopher Tommaso Campanella. "The greater part of the city is built upon a high hill ... It is divided into seven rings or huge circles named from the seven planets." Minas Tirith's original name, Minis Anor, translates to 'Tower of the Sun'. In his letters, Tolkien also places Minas Tirith "at about the latitude of Florence" in relation to the other key locations of his stories, which happens to be one of the great cities of Renaissance thought and art.

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Celtic Mythology

A key source for a new take on elves in fantasy

1897–1700 BCE

If Tolkien drew a lot from European histories and myths for humanity in his works, it was the British Celts who inspired his elves, with a particular focus on Ireland and Wales. Day points out that "before Tolkien, the term 'elf' was very loose, most often associated with pixies, flower-fairies, gnomes, dwarfs and goblins and considered to be of diminutive and inconsequential nature." What Tolkien did was draw from the Irish legend of the Tuatha Dé Danann – immortal people who lived on the island before humans. Like the Tuatha, Tolkien's elves are tall, beautiful, ancient and immune to sickness, as well as possessing some magical abilities.

Anglo-Saxons

The people who most influenced the Rohirrim

5th–11th Century

Some Anglo-Saxon works have already been mentioned, but Tolkien seems to have drawn from this group frequently, particularly when associated with his horse-riding warriors in Rohan. In his letters he points to many of the names and language of Rohan being drawn from Anglo-Saxon originals, but even lines in the books mimic poetry of the era. For instance, Snyder presents a line from *The Wanderer* that translates as, "Where is the horse? Where is the rider? Where has the gift-giver gone?" In *The Lord of the Rings*, Aragorn says the following as he passes burial mounds, – typical of Anglo-Saxons and written around the time of the uncovering of Sutton Hoo in 1939 – "Where now the horse and the rider? Where is the horn that was blowing?"

The spot in Leicester where Richard III's remains were found

The Search for RICHARD III

Philippa Langley discusses her hunt for the king's grave as we mark ten years since his rediscovery

Interview by Emily Staniforth

What first inspired your fascination with Richard III?

It was reading a book about the real man, from the contemporary source materials, by Paul Murray Kendall. Up until that point I thought Shakespeare's Richard III was who he was. Reading about Richard from his own lifetime utterly fascinated me. That book was what really ignited it because I thought how come we don't know this guy? It was a really big gap in our storytelling. I think the most valuable source material is from someone's own lifetime and I understand that with many historians they want to take everything that the Tudors said about [Richard] when he was dead. I think if you do an experiment and just look at what we have while the man was alive and look at what it tells us about who he was, then you see a very different kind of man. There are four clear tenets in his life that we can see across the board in that he was loyal, brave, devout [and] just, and we have evidence to prove that.

Why was it important to find the final resting place of Richard III?

It was about making history work because we had the story of Richard's bones being thrown into the River Soar but there was no evidence for that story. It just seemed to be another myth that had been attached to Richard and had become fact. So for me, if his grave was still there then what else could we find out about the actual man himself, the historical Richard? I think it was about that and also his being a king. It's been labelled on Richard that he was an illegal king but we have the contemporary source materials that show that he was petitioned to become king and was elected king by the three estates of the realm. If we reburied him, it was to rebury him as a king.

How did your search begin?

There was a very unconventional start in 2004 and 2005 because I had an intuitive experience in the northern end of the social services car park [where the king's remains were found, in Leicester] where I felt I was walking on his grave. I then began to look at some of the information on Richard's burial. In Leicester, [Greyfriars] church where Richard was buried was believed to be under bank buildings and a road. At that point, any search for the king's grave was out of the question because it just didn't seem tenable. Then in 2007 there was an archaeological dig in Greyfriars Street but they found no evidence of the church in that area. It was at that time that I thought to look at everything and various plans, maps and 18th and 19th century accounts all suggested that Greyfriars church was opposite St Martin's church [which is now] the northern end of the social services car park. What was more important was I couldn't find anything that challenged that view. That's what really made me determined to get the search for the king underway.

How did you feel when everything was pointing to Richard being buried beneath the car park?

On day one of the dig, the very first thing we found were lower leg bones in the place where I'd had that strange experience. It was surreal. I thought it could be him, but the archaeologists had to do their job. They said: "We don't even know if we're in the Greyfriars precinct yet, Philippa. We don't know where the church is. We don't know what antiquity these remains are." They just had to cover them up and move on. Then this great big storm cloud arrived and the whole dig went black and there was thunder and lightning and rain. It was like some Shakespearean experience! Obviously the archaeologists have to do their thing and I hadn't told any of them about this intuitive experience, so as the client in the dig I instructed exhumation of those remains and that's where we found him.

After finding Richard's remains, how important was it that he was reburied as a king?

Hugely important because he wasn't going to get a royal coat of arms on his tomb. I did have to fight for that and got it. I checked with a lot of specialist organisations, like the College of Arms, and they agreed that he was a king and he had to have his royal coat of arms on his tomb.

With the upcoming release of* The Lost King*, what do you hope to achieve in terms of continuing the discussion around Richard III?

It's about putting the historic Richard centre stage now, because it's always been Shakespeare's version of Richard and we now have a really powerful counterpoint to that. [The find] has kicked off so much incredible research about Richard III. Young historians get in touch with me all the time to say that they want to look into Richard. They want to make their own discoveries. I'm really excited about what the future might bring because we've got a whole new generation of historians who will be searching archives.

EXPERT BIO

PHILIPPA LANGLEY

Philippa is a writer and honorary president of the Scottish branch of the Richard III Society. She led the search that discovered the remains of Richard III in a car park in Leicester in 2012.

BELOW The coffin of Richard III on the way to Leicester Cathedral to be reburied, 2015

The Lost King, starring Sally Hawkins, Steve Coogan and Harry Lloyd, tells the story of the search for Richard III and will be released in the UK on 7 October.

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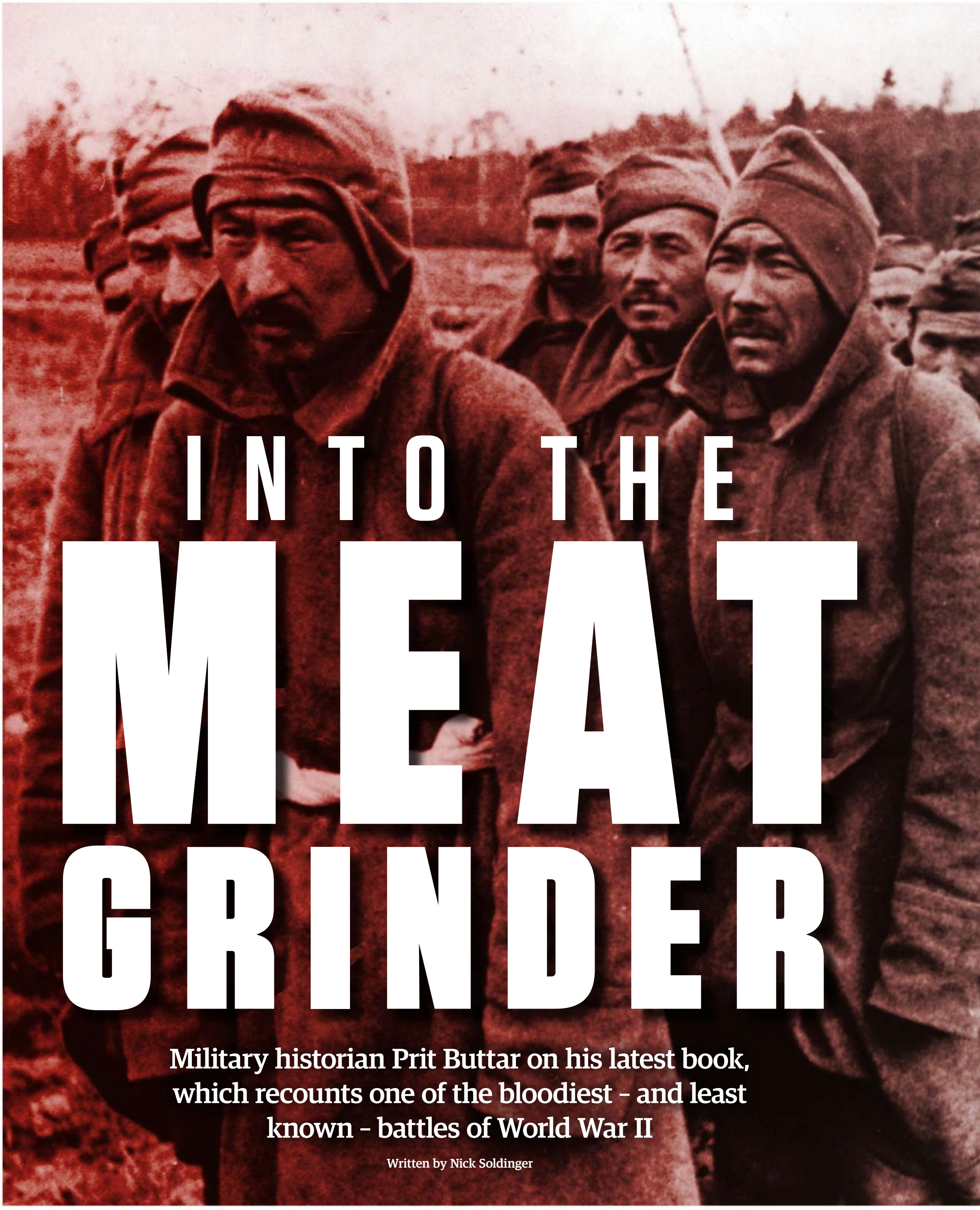


INTO THE MEAT GRINDER

Military historian Prit Buttar on his latest book, which recounts one of the bloodiest - and least known - battles of World War II

Written by Nick Soldinger

EXPERT BIO

PRIT BUTTAR

Prit Buttar was educated at Oxford University and served in the British Army as a surgeon. He is the author of ten books about the Eastern Front in both World War I and World War II.

Between July and December 1942, a series of battles raged on the Eastern Front across a giant bulge in the German front line west of Moscow. The fighting, often taking place in forests and swamps in both the searing heat of summer and the freezing depths of Russian winter, would result in horrific casualties on both sides. More than half a million men were lost fighting for what would ultimately turn out to be one of the most futile causes of World War II. Here, expert Prit Buttar talks about the tragic significance of the Rzhev salient.

Your book is called Meat Grinder: The Battles for the Rzhev salient. Where does 'Meat Grinder' come from?
It was the rather grim name given to the entire theatre by the Soviet troops fighting in the Rzhev salient. They were put through the mill several times there, much like British divisions on the Somme. They came to call it the Meat Grinder because so many of their comrades perished for so little gain. The men understood the utter futility of it.

What was the background to these battles; how did the salient form?
In late 1941, the German invasion of Russia ran out of steam when its forces were about 30 kilometres short of Moscow. Soviet forces counterattacked, initially successfully, but then the Germans dug in. As the front line stabilised in early 1942, the salient was formed in the German line about 130 kilometres west of Moscow with the Soviets around its northward-projecting bulge to the east, north and west. It was seen as strategically important by both sides as a potential springboard for a renewed attack on the Russian capital, which is why it became the focus of such intense and bitter fighting.

What were the main objectives of Case Blue in 1942?
Case Blue was the name given to the German summer offensive that year. Its main aim was the Caucasus oil fields in the south. In order to facilitate this, the Germans created the deception that there would be a renewed attack on Moscow. It's why so many Russian forces were concentrated around Rzhev.

How did the opposing military forces in the salient match up?
The German forces under General Model were all veteran divisions; they were all in well-prepared defensive positions consisting of two or three battle lines complete with interlinking communication trenches, barbed wire,

minefields and anti-tank obstacles. The terrain they were in was well suited to defensive operations, too. It was densely forested, and because it was crisscrossed with rivers, very swampy in places. On top of this, the Germans were well equipped, well supplied and well led. By contrast, the force it faced, although much larger, had real problems. The Red Army at that time was going through a painful evolution. Due in part to Stalin's prewar purges, it was having to learn how to fight and win in the most testing circumstances conceivable. In terms of its leadership, its training, its doctrine and its equipment, it had a long way to go before it would become a war-winning force.

Were there significant early skirmishes before the first battle?
In the spring of 1942, the Russian Cavalry Corps, under General Belov, broke through the German front lines but became cut off. It was reinforced by airborne troops, and Belov found himself in charge of a force of around 30,000 men, which at one point commanded an area behind German lines that was about half the size of Belgium. The Germans diverted significant forces in an attempt to eliminate them, but remarkably, Belov's men managed to fight their way out and escaped the salient to the south.

"THE RED ARMY AT THAT TIME WAS GOING THROUGH A PAINFUL EVOLUTION"

When were the first major battles?
At the end of July, with the Russians marching south across the steppe towards Stalingrad, the Red Army, under General Zhukov, launched its first attack against the salient. Zhukov's original intention had been to nip it off at its base, but he lacked the armour to do this. He opted for a two-pronged assault against the salient from the north and northeast. The terrain on these fronts very much favoured the Germans, and this is when the Meat Grinder really began. The Russians threw as many as half a million men against the eight to ten German divisions defending that part of the line only to suffer around 200,000 casualties without any significant gains. The Germans lost around 30,000. The fighting rolled on until September when it petered out.

Why did this first offensive fail?
There's this account by a Russian veteran which neatly sums it up. In it, he describes how impressive the initial artillery bombardment was. How he and his comrades had then hurled themselves forward only to be pinned down by machine-gun fire. How they'd then watched as their tanks rolled through the German line and had disappeared. It illustrates pretty much everything that went wrong. The bombardment may have looked impressive, but it manifestly failed as the German defences remained largely intact. When the Russian infantry attacked, the Germans used machine-gun and mortar fire to drive them to cover. Few, if any, of the Russian tanks had radios, and because they fought 'buttoned-up' [with the tank commander inside rather than above the turret] coordination between armoured forces and ground troops was poor. The tanks just motored into the German rear, where without infantry support they were easily picked off.

How did the second Soviet offensive differ from the first?
The second offensive was called Operation Mars. Zhukov planned a four-pronged attack from the east, west, north and northwest. To a large extent this approach was dictated by the terrain, as there simply weren't enough roads to allow a better concentration of effort. The attacks were launched in late November and fighting ground on throughout the winter. The attacks on the eastern and northern sides made no real progress, despite heavy losses. The one on the western side had some success, but the Germans managed to hold the shoulders of the attack. Even though the Red Army managed to break through and push a mechanised corps through the gap, it was soon cut off, suffering heavy losses trying to break out again. The attack on the northwest was the only one that resulted in any permanent gain by the Red Army.

Fighting on the four fronts was even more intense than it'd been in the summer. The Red Army suffered around 300,000 casualties, while the Germans lost maybe 35,000 men. Ultimately, it was a failure for much the same reasons the first offensive had failed, and the fact that it did tells you something about Zhukov's character. He'd grown up in the region, so knew better than most how difficult the terrain was to fight an offensive campaign in. The two words most often used to describe him by those who knew him were 'brutal' and 'stubborn'.

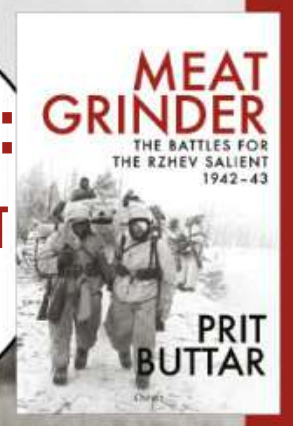
Despite the failure of Operation Mars, Model was ordered to withdraw his forces from the salient. Why was that?
By 1943, the whole of the southern front had been torn to pieces. German casualties were high, while its infantry had never really recovered from the first months of the eastern war. Troops were now needed for the summer offensive, particularly to reinforce the northern side of the Kursk salient. The only way that could be done was for Model to shorten his line by withdrawing his troops from the Rzhev salient. Plans were drawn up and a phased fighting withdrawal was executed over two weeks in early March. The lines of retreat were so well organised that it was carried out almost unmolested by the Red Army. Each unit knew the routes it needed to follow. Artillery shells were pre-positioned so that once guns had exhausted their supplies in one place they could be moved back and set up again where new stockpiles were waiting for them. Each unit kept in touch with those on its flanks so none were ever exposed. The Germans also destroyed anything as they went, ensuring that the Red Army inherited a wasteland.

What lessons did the Red Army learn from its experiences in the Meat Grinder?
After the German withdraw, the Russians got to inspect their positions and realised just how good they were. This made them reassess their whole approach to their god of war – artillery – and about their whole approach to bombardments and reconnaissance. The Red Army was very good at analysing its performances in battle and learning from them. Over time, it came to understand that it needed to improve its combined-arms operations, too, as well as allow their officers greater flexibility in the field.

TOP: Red Army troops attacked German positions en masse in deadly frontal attacks

LEFT: The remains of over 700 Red Army soldiers were unearthed in a mass grave near the town of Rzhev in 2020

MEAT GRINDER: THE BATTLES FOR THE RZHEV SALIENT
BY PRIT BUTTAR IS AVAILABLE FROM OSPREY PUBLISHING FROM 13 OCTOBER 2022



Finally, why do you think these titanic battles have been largely overlooked by history?

From the Red Army's point of view, the battles were a failure. At best they were explained away as a necessary diversion that helped secure the victory at Stalingrad. For the most part, though, they were airbrushed out in Russia because it put the leadership in a bad light – no country is immune to controlling narratives in this way, however. I'm appalled to say that I was well into my 40s before I'd heard of the Bengal famine, not least because British histories of World War II make no mention of this largely human-made disaster. I think that if you read a history of your country and what you're reading doesn't sometimes make you feel uncomfortable, then what you're reading probably isn't history.

ABOVE LEFT: A German sniper selects his target in the Rzhev salient in the winter of 1942

ABOVE: Thousands of Red Army troops were captured by the Germans during the battles

RIGHT: A German soldier rushes to defend his position from another Russian onslaught

All images: © Alamy

Greatest Battles

SIEGE OF SERINGAPATAM

MYSORE, INDIA, APRIL-MAY 1799

Written by Stuart Hadaway

In the mid-1790s, Great Britain's colonies in India were largely limited to widely separated coastal enclaves, where the East India Company (EIC) conducted trade while protected by its own armed forces. These were mainly composed of 'native' battalions, locally recruited officers and men with a smattering of white European officers in command. A small number of EIC battalions were made up of white European soldiers, many of them central European mercenaries.

The main British enclaves were the three 'Presidencies' in Madras, Bombay and Bengal. Each had their own governor and was largely independent of the others, although all came under the higher direction of the governor general. With commercial profit their main aim, the EIC's troops were subject to various cost-cutting policies, such as

officers often holding relatively low ranks for their actual command duties (battalions being run by majors rather than lieutenant colonels, for example), and a ban on training with live ammunition.

Although Britain's footprint in India was small, it was slowly growing and there had been a series of wars against the other major powers in the south of the sub-continent, including the Maratha Confederacy and Mysore. The Marathas had been defeated after a long war in 1782, but had themselves defeated the forces of Hyderabad in 1795. This led the Nizam of Hyderabad to sign an alliance with the EIC, and this in turn gave the British a strong ally to the north of their other major threat – Mysore.

Mysore covered a huge area on the western side of southern India. It was protected on either side by two north-south running mountain ranges, the Western and Eastern Ghauts. Mysore's leader, Tipu Sultan, hated the British passionately and was developing close ties to Britain's European enemy, Revolutionary France. Mysore had fought three wars with the EIC already. In the First Mysore War (1766-69) Tipu's father, Hyder Ali, had invaded and defeated the Madras Presidency.

The Second War (1780-84) had seen a French-backed Ali again win victories over the EIC, until the withdrawal of French support led to a peace being signed and a return to the pre-war status quo. The Third War (1790-92) had seen Tipu's forces badly beaten and much of his territory lost.

Since then, he had been working to modernise his forces and military economy with French support. With France's help, Tipu now had a solid, disciplined army based around European-style infantry and artillery, and backed by a large number of traditional Indian cavalry. His artillery included not only field guns but also large numbers of rockets.

BRITAIN TIGHTENS ITS GRIP

Sir Richard Wellesley, Earl of Mornington, had arrived in 1798 to take over as governor general with a determination to expand British India, and the growing strength of Mysore gave him an obvious first target. Preparations quietly began to gather supplies and draw up plans, while diplomatic efforts were made to break the Franco-Mysore alliance. Mornington appointed Lieutenant General George Harris to command the invasion. In this, Harris was ably supported by Colonel Sir Arthur

A fanciful re-creation of the death of Tipu Sultan, who died in the fighting

© Alamy

An official of the British East India Company riding on an elephant, end of 18th century

© Alamy

Wellesley, Mornington's younger brother and unofficial advisor.

Wellesley had been in India since 1797, and was well versed in the importance of organisation, planning and logistics. He would play a key role in the organisation of the invasion, although his junior rank precluded him from having a command position in Harris's army. Instead, Wellesley was made adviser to, and thus de facto commander of, the forces of the Nizam of Hyderabad.

While Harris and the Nizam would advance into Mysore from the east, a third and smaller component of the army would advance from Bombay in the west, under the command of Lieutenant General James Stuart.

The invasion began in February 1799. Stuart's force of 6,500 men (half of them European) was to march from Cannanore through the friendly province of Coorg and into the Western Ghauts. Harris, with 20,000 fighting men (4,300 European) and the siege train, was to march from Vellore to the Eastern Ghauts and then north-west to Bangalore. To his north the Nizam's force of another 20,000 men, including six battalions of EIC infantry and the King's 33rd Foot (Wellelsey's battalion), marched on a parallel course. Everything that the armies needed for the campaign was to be carried with them in a vast supply train.

Organised by Wellesley, he had tapped into local travelling traders known as Brinjaries to provide the largest yet cheapest force possible. Effectively, they were a vast moving bazaar that would sell the army all that it needed during the campaign.

INVASION OF MYSORE

Assailed from two sides, Tipu reacted by playing for time. With the monsoons due in June, he knew that the British could only stay in the field for four months. His massed irregular cavalrymen harassed the advancing forces, especially their supply train, while at the same time clearing the land in front of them. His horsemen burned crops and drove off livestock, slowing the British advance as their pack animals suffered from lack of fresh fodder. Meanwhile, he used his interior lines of communications to strike at each of the advancing armies in turn.

Tipu's first strike was at Stuart's army. On 6 March 1799, Tipu unleashed around 12,000 men against them at Sedaseer, high in the mountains. Despite heavily outnumbering the EIC force, the cramped terrain stopped the Tipu's forces from deploying fully and instead provided dense targets for Stuart's artillery. Even so, it took five hours of hard fighting and a final, desperate counter-attack to repel Tipu's troops. At the end of the day, Stuart's forces also had to withdraw, having used up most of their ammunition. It was unable to advance for another five days, by which time Tipu's forces had switched to the western theatre.

In the west, the Nizam and Harris had found their progress slowed by Tipu's scorched earth policy. On 19 March, an abrupt change of course was made, off the Bangalore road and heading directly to Seringapatam. This broke them free from the Mysorean cavalry noose around them. Not only that, but many local farmers eagerly brought in livestock and produce to sell to the EIC, knowing that it would only be destroyed by Tipu's forces anyway. The supply situation immediately improved, and so did the speed of the march. It took the Mysorean forces a week to re-establish their cordon around the massive columns.

General Sir David Baird discovering the body of Tipu Sultan after storming Seringapatam

Image source: wiki/ Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

On 27 March, Tipu drew up his army along a ridgeline at Malavelley. His infantry and cavalry were drawn up with his artillery arrayed in front of them. Harris arranged his men into two columns which ended up becoming more of an arrow-head formation, with a column of the Nizam's troops (led by Colonel Wellesley and his 33rd Foot) on their left. They advanced towards the ridge under steady cannon fire, until Tipu launched his men forward in a charge which blocked his cannon's line of fire. Wellesley calmly swung his column into a line and opened fire at 60 metres range, his volleys shattering Tipu's infantry. On the other flank, Mysorean cavalry and elephants managed to get around behind some of the EIC battalions, causing confusion. A counter-charge by the Nizam's horsemen rammed into their flank, while the 12th Foot held their fire until the Mysoreans were just ten metres away before firing a volley into their midst. The Tipu's troops fell back towards the ridge, where their artillery was already limbering up and retreating. Placing the guns in front of the line had been a mistake.

After the battle, Sir Arthur Wellesley, later the Duke of Wellington, would defend many ridgelines, but would always be careful to intersperse his guns among the infantry. That way, they could continue to fire around the infantry and give support as they advanced, rather than having their fire blocked.

Tipu now withdrew to Seringapatam, leaving his cavalry to again provide the main resistance. Harris, who had suffered surprisingly light casualties, conducted another abrupt change of direction two days later and once more managed to break into bountiful territory. By 4 April, Harris was just a few miles short of Seringapatam, and with six clear weeks until the monsoon.

THE SIEGE BEGINS

Seringapatam sat on a triangular island three miles long, surrounded by the River Cauvery. The actual city, behind imposing walls, sat on the western end of the island, while much of the rest was taken up by military camps protected by earthworks. When the British had attacked the city in 1792 they had approached from the north, across the main course of the Cauvery, and since then that wall had been significantly strengthened. Approaching from the east or south meant fighting through Tipu's army to get at the walls. This only left the weakest, western wall, but what the EIC could not see was the new, second wall built just inside the older outer one. Harris chose the western approach.

A blunderbuss flintlock pistol

© Alamy

There were several obstacles in the way to this approach, including a raised aqueduct bordered by areas of jungle ('topes'), and a stream known as the Little Cauvery, and then a branch of the River Cauvery itself. Arriving on 5 April 1799, the army came under harassing musketry and rocket fire from the area of the aqueduct. An attempt was made that night to clear Tipu's forces from the aqueduct and topes, with two columns going forward, each consisting of a single King's battalion and two battalions of the Madras Native Infantry. The southern one, led by Colonel Wellesley with the 33rd Foot, approached the tope near the village of Sultanpetah, and like the north column was met with intense rocket fire. Both attacking columns quickly fell into disarray, fighting in unfamiliar country and disorientated by the flames and glare of the rockets. Both columns fell back in utter confusion, although casualties were light. It was a rare failure in Wellesley's career.

Order was gradually regained and at dawn the attack was resumed, clearing the aqueduct in short order. Over the following days the army established itself and plans were drawn up. On 14 April, General Stuart's force arrived on the northern side of the Cauvery. Further outposts among the waterways facing Harris were cleared, culminating in a sweep by Wellesley on 26-7 April that finally cleared the enemy from west of the Cauvery. The next day, the first breaching batteries opened fire on the walls.

On 3 May the breach was declared practical for an assault, even though it had only opened a gap along the top of the outer wall; the lower inner wall was not visible. The breach was 60 metres wide, and the steep ramp of rubble had tumbled down to partially fill the ditch at the base of the wall. The British forces were gathered overnight in the trenches near the river, while Lieutenant Lalor of the 73rd Foot marked the shallower crossing areas with flags.

INTO THE BREACH

The EIC forces would go forward in two columns, each climbing a different side of the breach before turning left and right to start clearing the defenders from the walls. Each was led by a small 'Forlorn Hope', groups of volunteers who would spring any ambushes and draw the first enemy volley. The volunteers, a sergeant and 12 men in each party, would receive promotions if they survived, the sergeants making the near impossible leap to become officers. Following the first 'Hopes' were two more, each a lieutenant with 25 men. Behind them came the main columns, around 3,000 men each drawn from a range of units. In overall command was Major General Sir David Baird, who had been held as a prisoner in Seringapatam for several years in the early 1780s and who thirsted for revenge.

EAST INDIA COMPANY

© Alamy

GEORGE HARRIS

First seeing active service in the American War of Independence as a captain, Harris first went to India in the 1780s. He returned to India in 1794 and was commander-in-chief of the Madras Army by 1797. He led the attack on Seringapatam and received £100,000 as a reward for his efforts.

© Alamy

NIZAM ALI KHAN

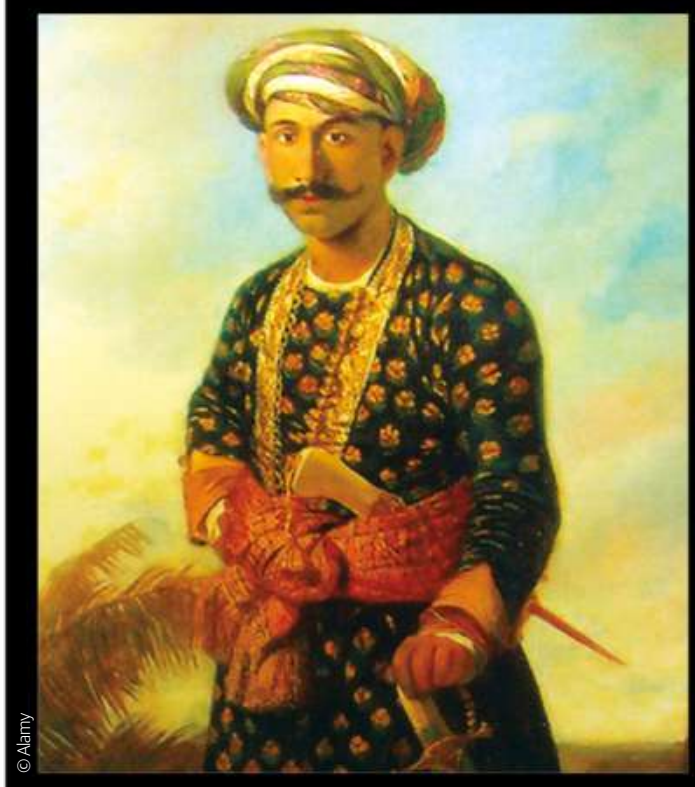
The second Nizam (ruler) of Hyderabad State in South India from 1762 to 1803, Khan entered into an alliance with the British East India Company having seen that Tipu Sultan was likely to lose. He supplied ten battalions and over 16,000 cavalry to the siege, which was key to opening up the breach in the wall.

© Alamy

DAVID BAIRD

Baird would personally lead the storming party that took the stronghold of Seringapatam in 1799, but had previously been a prisoner there when he was captured early in his military career. He went on to fight in the French Revolutionary Wars and Peninsular War.

MYSORE



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TIPU SULTAN

Known as the Tiger of Mysore, Tipu Sultan was a freedom fighter who forged his own kingdom in Southern India from 1782. He had attempted to gain support from the Ottoman Empire and France against the British before the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War, but was unsuccessful. He was killed at Seringapatam.

© Alamy

PURNAIAH

A leading statesman under Tipu Sultan, Purnaiah was known as a gifted administrator, not least thanks to his mastery of economics, languages and remarkable memory. He was at Tipu Sultan's side for every battle he fought and was in command at the Battle of Sultanpet Tope just as the siege was beginning.

At 1.00pm, the two columns rose up and surged forward. Tipu still had around 30,000 men in the city, but obviously could not bring all of them to face the breach. His artillery had been cleared from the outer walls by EIC guns, although rocketmen flooded back to the ramparts with their portable weapons. Infantry lined the parapets of the inner and outer walls.

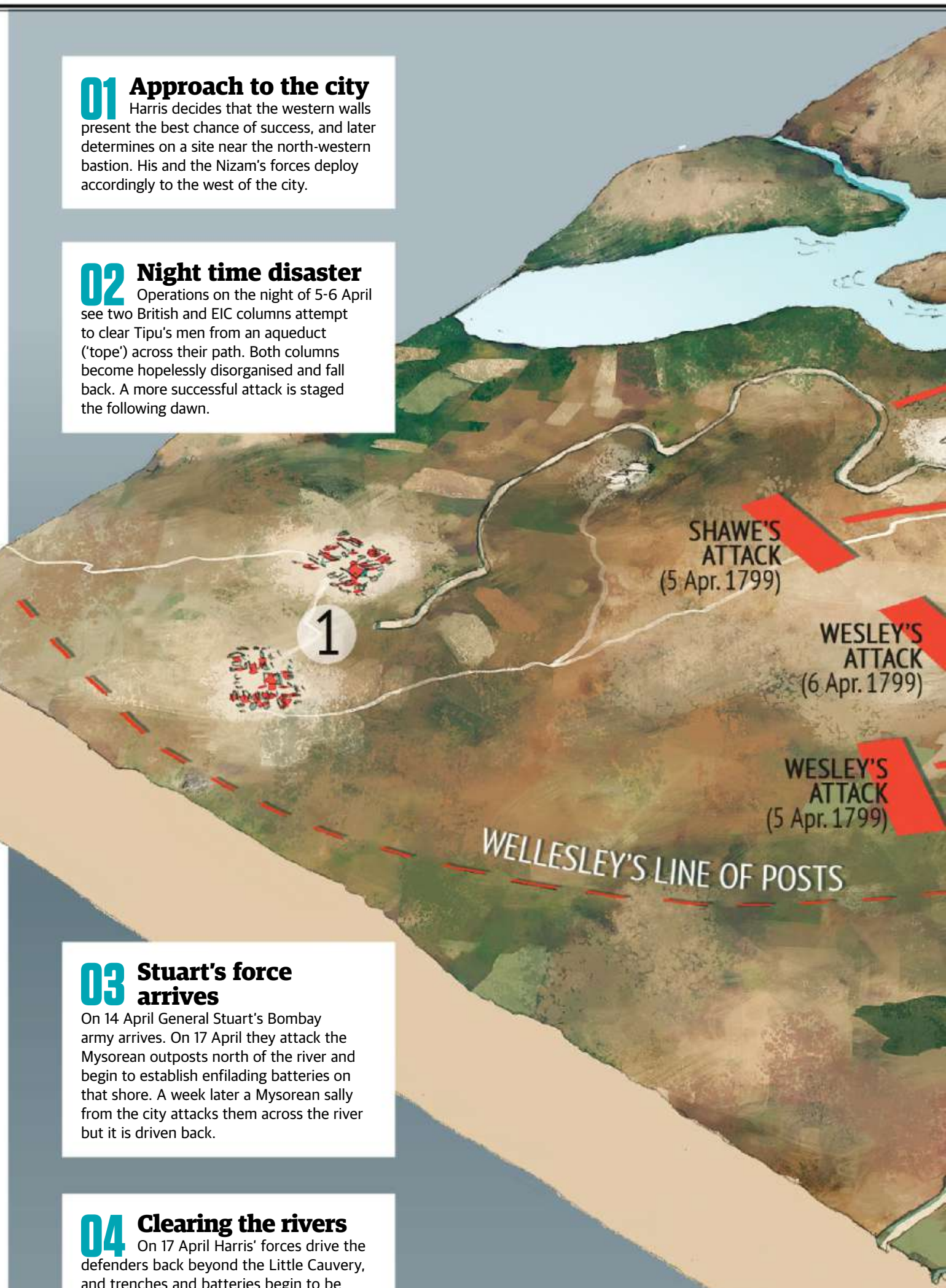
Sergeant Graham, leading the Forlorn Hope of the left hand column, reached the top of the breach, paused, and cried: "It's Lieutenant Graham now!" before falling dead, killed by musket fire.

On both sides the British and EIC troops scrambled up the rubble and clambered onto the parapets. Hand-to-hand fighting broke out as they also found themselves unexpectedly coming under flanking fire from the inner wall. The force turning north found themselves facing troops led by Tipu in person, who stood in the front ranks being fed loaded muskets from behind. To the south, the second force met slightly less resistance and slowly made progress. Led by Baird, they pushed the 600 metres to the Mysore Gate and then on to the south east bastion, and finally the Banglore Gate on the far side of the city – an advance of 1,300 metres in about one hour.

To the north of the breach, a British officer finally found a narrow path connecting the outer wall to the inner one. He dashed across, followed by his men in single file. Gradually they cleared the inner wall, and without the flanking fire the forces on the outer wall began to make headway. Tipu was pulled away by his bodyguards as Mysorean resistance crumbled. He was later found, dead along with his bodyguards, in a tunnel at the Water Gate. Who killed him remains a mystery but it was clear that he went down fighting.

The rest of the city now became flooded with British and Indian soldiers with their blood up and free from the control of their officers. Looting and violence, the traditional epilogue to any siege, spread through the city. In terms of the plunder, the EIC had hit a rare jackpot. Materials worth some £2 million (in contemporary terms) were taken from Tipu's palace and other buildings, including vast amounts of gold and jewellery. Huge military stores were also found – over 1,000 cannon, 100,000 muskets and 200 tons of gunpowder. Fortunes were made at the time, and from the prize money subsequently paid out. Around 9,000 Mysorean troops were killed in the attack, while around 1,500 British and EIC troops were killed or wounded.

In the aftermath of the siege, Sir Arthur Wellesley was placed in command of the city and subsequently the rest of Mysore. This was the real start of British expansion in India, a path that in half a century would see the bulk of the sub-continent come under their control.



01 Approach to the city
Harris decides that the western walls present the best chance of success, and later determines on a site near the north-western bastion. His and the Nizam's forces deploy accordingly to the west of the city.

02 Night time disaster
Operations on the night of 5-6 April see two British and EIC columns attempt to clear Tipu's men from an aqueduct ('tope') across their path. Both columns become hopelessly disorganised and fall back. A more successful attack is staged the following dawn.

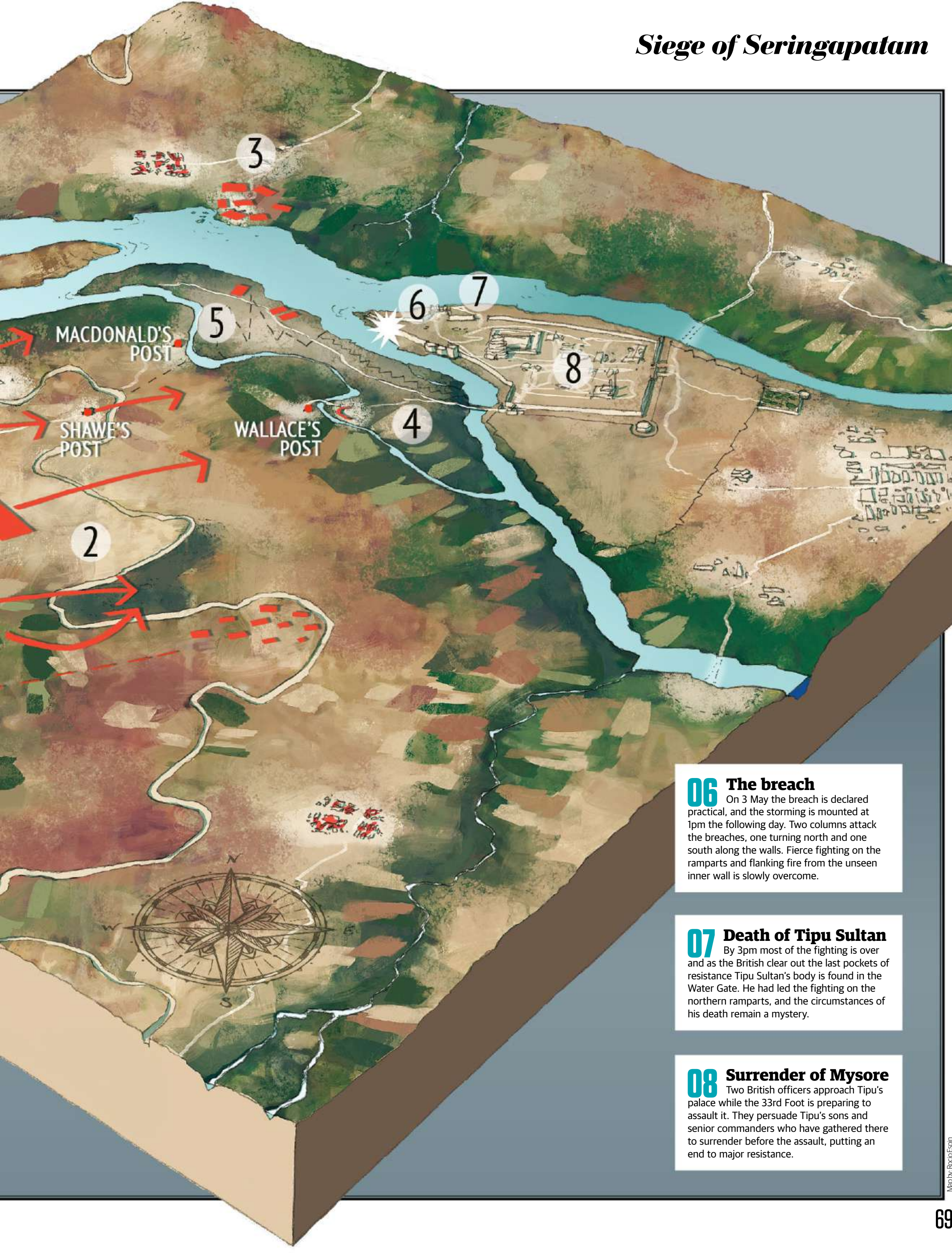
03 Stuart's force arrives
On 14 April General Stuart's Bombay army arrives. On 17 April they attack the Mysorean outposts north of the river and begin to establish enfilading batteries on that shore. A week later a Mysorean sally from the city attacks them across the river but it is driven back.

04 Clearing the rivers
On 17 April Harris' forces drive the defenders back beyond the Little Cauvery, and trenches and batteries begin to be dug. Smaller batteries start clearing the Mysorean guns from the walls. On 27-28 April the area beyond the small river is also cleared, and digging begins on the breaching batteries.

05 Powder Mill Battery
On 20 April the Mysorean outpost in the old Powder Mill is finally captured, removing a thorn in the EIC's side. It is immediately developed as a breaching battery, and two days later is firing onto Seringapatam's walls.

"TIPU SULTAN'S BODY WAS FOUND IN THE WATER GATE. HE HAD LED THE FIGHTING ON THE NORTHERN RAMPARTS, AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS DEATH REMAIN A MYSTERY"

Siege of Seringapatam



06 The breach
On 3 May the breach is declared practical, and the storming is mounted at 1pm the following day. Two columns attack the breaches, one turning north and one south along the walls. Fierce fighting on the ramparts and flanking fire from the unseen inner wall is slowly overcome.

07 Death of Tipu Sultan
By 3pm most of the fighting is over and as the British clear out the last pockets of resistance Tipu Sultan's body is found in the Water Gate. He had led the fighting on the northern ramparts, and the circumstances of his death remain a mystery.

08 Surrender of Mysore
Two British officers approach Tipu's palace while the 33rd Foot is preparing to assault it. They persuade Tipu's sons and senior commanders who have gathered there to surrender before the assault, putting an end to major resistance.

Map by: Rocio Espin

What If...

FREDERICK III OF GERMANY HAD SURVIVED?

He was a respected military hero and liberal visionary, so did a different future for Germany and Europe die with him?

Interview by David J Williamson

INTERVIEW WITH

CHRISTINA CROFT

Christina is the author of 15 books about World War I and 19th century royalty, including *The Silent Emperor – German Emperor Frederick III* and *The Innocence of Kaiser Wilhelm II*.

Photo courtesy of Christina Croft

In the procession to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887 he had cut a gallant and dashing figure in his gleaming guard's uniform. But the future for German Emperor Frederick III, husband to the queen's eldest daughter, was to be a short and tragic affair. He had waited so long for his chance to mould his vision of a better, unified and more liberal future for his nation through his compassion, dignity and loyalty. Tragically, illness would strike him down at the age of 56 and, quite literally, rob him of his voice and the potential to set the future of Germany – and Europe – on a very different course.

What unique skills and experience would Frederick III have brought to his reign and how would they have helped him?

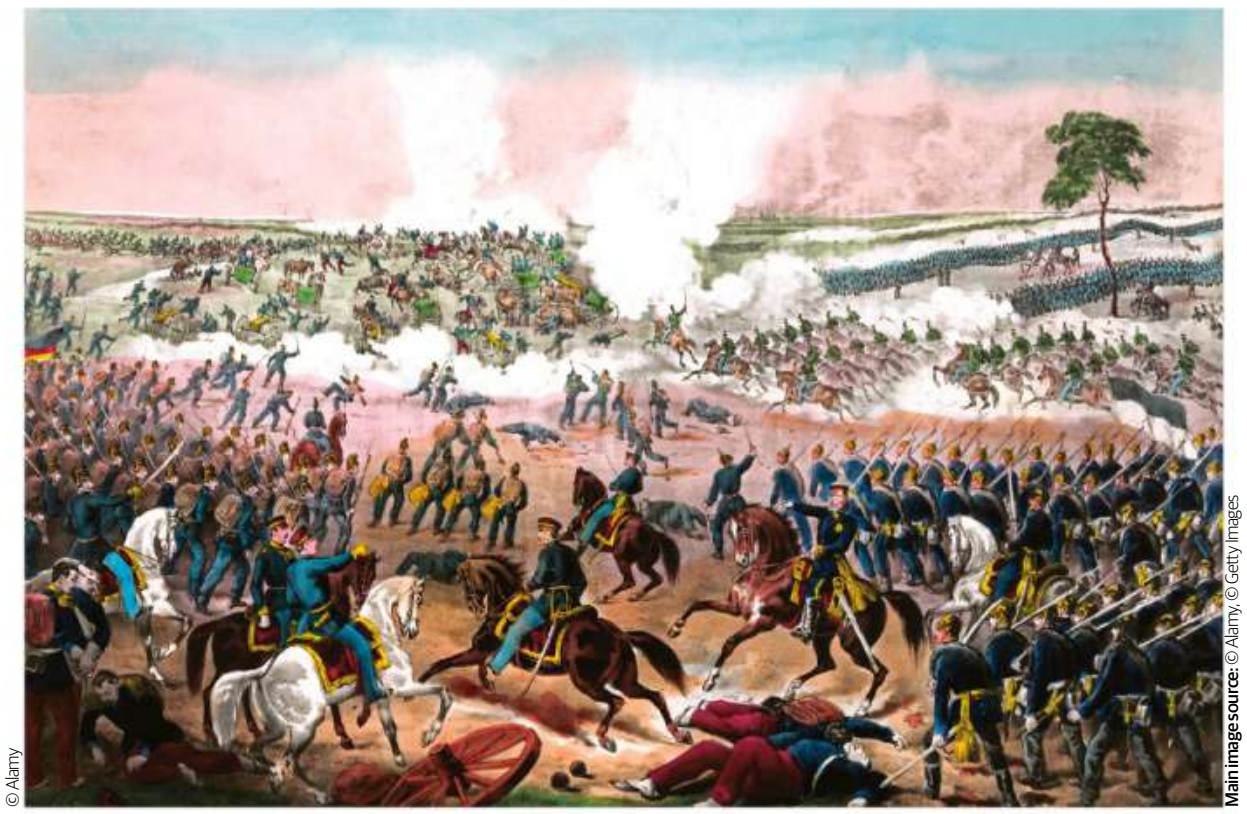
On his accession [in March 1888], Frederick III had the advantage of an exemplary military record having played a major role in the Austro-Prussian and Franco-Prussian Wars. His courage and concern for his men had won him the support of the army, which was vital for any ruler; and his victory over the French enabled him to help bring about German unification, which could be seen as having given him the right to become German Emperor.

Since his early childhood, he had learned to listen to opposing views without expressing an opinion, which would be helpful in bringing together the opposing political factions within the German empire. His natural affability, which so endeared him to Queen Victoria, could also have facilitated easy conversation with foreign dignitaries, potentially leading to strong diplomatic ties with other European Powers.

Physically, he was blessed with the physique and features of an ideal Prussian king: 'A towering Lohengrin-like figure,' according to several contemporaries. 'An ideal prince among princes.' At a time when the emperor was seen as the embodiment of his country, his appearance would have made a powerful impression and won the loyalty of his people, and portrayed the newly unified Germany as a strong, potent new nation.

If he had reigned longer, how could he have taken on German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck and won?

Although, as crown prince, Frederick resented Bismarck's deliberate attempts to exclude him from affairs of state, and the unscrupulous methods that he used to bring his draconian plans to fruition, he also recognised his political acumen, his diplomatic experience and his reputation as an effective statesman. In spite of their differences, there were also points of agreement: they were in accord about the necessity of the Schleswig-Holstein campaign and the Franco-Prussian War and, when the rulers of several German states, including Frederick's father,



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Main image source: © Alamy, © Getty Images

RIGHT
Frederick III was a brave and talented leader in battle

That way,
TOWARDS
PEACE!

THE PAST

1864-71

LEADERSHIP & COURAGE

Frederick was a successful, respected, talented and compassionate military leader for his country. He had his first taste of battle in the Second Schleswig War against Denmark in 1864. He was in action again in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 and although reluctant to turn on former allies, loyalty to his country and its people prevailed. Following victory in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, a unified Germany was born. But during his lifetime recognition for Frederick's role in achieving such a pivotal moment in European history fell woefully short of what he deserved.

1858-88

SOULMATES

Frederick was a great admirer of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, as well as the British political system. A match was made with Vicky, the queen's eldest daughter, and their marriage proved to be one of true love and affection. They intended to rule as joint emperor and empress, but it was also a union of like-minded liberal thinkers. In a letter to her mother following Frederick's death, Vicky reaffirmed the strength of the bond with her late husband: "We loved Germany – we wished to see her strong and great, not only with the sword, but in all that was righteous, in culture, in progress and in liberty."

1871-88

THE LONG WAIT IN THE WINGS

Frederick had to wait patiently for his turn to rule. His father became the first emperor of a unified Germany in 1871. It was to be 17 years before Frederick was to take the title for himself, but by this time his health was failing him. A hoarseness of his voice quickly developed into cancer of the larynx. German and English doctors debated and diagnosed his condition with varying opinions and sometimes debatable treatments. Frederick remained stoic and dignified, but in the end lost his battle. He had ruled as emperor of Germany for just 99 days.

opposed the idea of a Prussian-led empire it was Bismarck to whom Frederick turned for help in hastening unification.

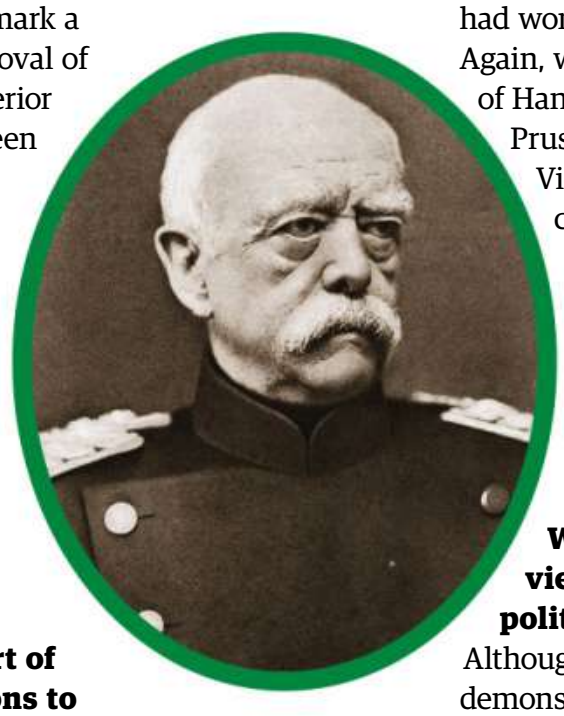
On his accession, Frederick asked the chancellor to remain in office and, according to Bismarck, relations between them became more harmonious. From the start, however, Frederick was determined to stamp his own authority on domestic policy. He insisted on adhering to the tradition of releasing prisoners to mark a new reign; and demanded the removal of the reactionary Minister of the Interior Robert von Puttkamer, who had been responsible for many oppressive measures including prohibiting strikes and public meetings.

It is reasonable, therefore, to assume that Frederick would have allowed Bismarck to remain in office as long as he respected his own domestic policy, but would have dismissed him, as his successor did, if he tried to undermine him.

ABOVE
Frederick admired the royal family of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, and the British political system

How important was the support of Frederick's wife and connections to the British royal family?

Frederick probably fell in love with the British royal family even before he fell in love with his future wife, Queen Victoria's eldest daughter Vicky. Drawn to the happy domesticity and mutual devotion of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, he developed a deep respect for Vicky's parents and they treated him as a son. His marriage was a love-match and his devotion to his wife and her family never waned.



ABOVE
Chancellor Otto von Bismarck was staunchly opposed to Frederick's liberal views

Nonetheless, he separated his personal life from his role as a future king, and when British and Prussian policies clashed he was vehemently loyal to his homeland. When there was a possibility that Britain would enter the Schleswig-Holstein War on the side of the Danes he remained committed to the campaign and, later, irked the fiercely pro-Danish prince of Wales by 'flaunting' the medals that he had won when Prussia defeated Denmark. Again, when Prussia seized the Kingdom of Hanover following the Austro-Prussian War, he ignored Queen Victoria's pleas on behalf of her cousin, the Hanoverian king. Vicky wrote to her mother on Frederick's behalf: "One must separate one's feelings for one's relations quite from one's judgement of political necessities, or one would be swayed to and from on all sides."

What impact would his liberal views have had on Germany, politically and socially?

Although the dismissal of Puttkamer demonstrated Frederick's intention of implementing more liberal domestic policies, it would be wrong to suppose that liberalism would characterise his reign. While he opposed Bismarck's oppressive regime, he was more inclined towards an autocracy than a constitutional monarchy. He shocked Prince Albert by urging his father to override his ministers' wishes regarding his coronation in order to demonstrate the authority of the Crown, which he believed had been undermined

by concessions granted during the 1848 revolution. He was aghast when Queen Victoria permitted one of her daughters to marry a commoner, and even more so when another of Vicky's sisters married a Prince of Battenberg – the son of a former lady-in-waiting. "If I have any say in the matter," he raged, "I'll take good care that my Battenberg brother-in-law only appears in the court lists as Royal Highness of Great Britain. It is a scandal that the Queen has made him a Royal Highness."

Liberals were often disappointed by his failure to speak on their behalf, and several contemporaries noted that he was perplexed by the demands of workers, with whom he never came into contact, and that his "liberal dream" meant ruling "with and for the bourgeoisie."

What impact would a more liberal Germany have had across Europe?

Within a few years of Frederick's death [on 15 June 1888], Germany was one of the most liberal countries in Europe, providing compensation schemes, pensions, sick pay and hygienic housing for workers. The Workingmen's Insurance Act was introduced 20 years before a similar scheme was introduced in Britain, and more secure jobs enabled even the most dispensable workers to begin to amass savings in one of the most flexible banking systems in the world. In Hamburg, for example, dock labourers were employed by the week; in Belgium, by the day; and in Britain only by the hour.

Frederick's early death did not hinder these improvements nor is there any reason to believe that, had he lived, they would have proceeded more quickly. The results, however, were not as beneficial as might be supposed because, with a more contented workforce, German industry thrived, which threatened the commercial superiority of other European powers. An increase in manufacturing created a need for more commercial outlets, which would require an effective merchant fleet, a navy to protect the seaways and ports or colonies to serve as fuelling stations. This led to tensions between Germany and her rivals, which would ultimately explode into the catastrophe of war.

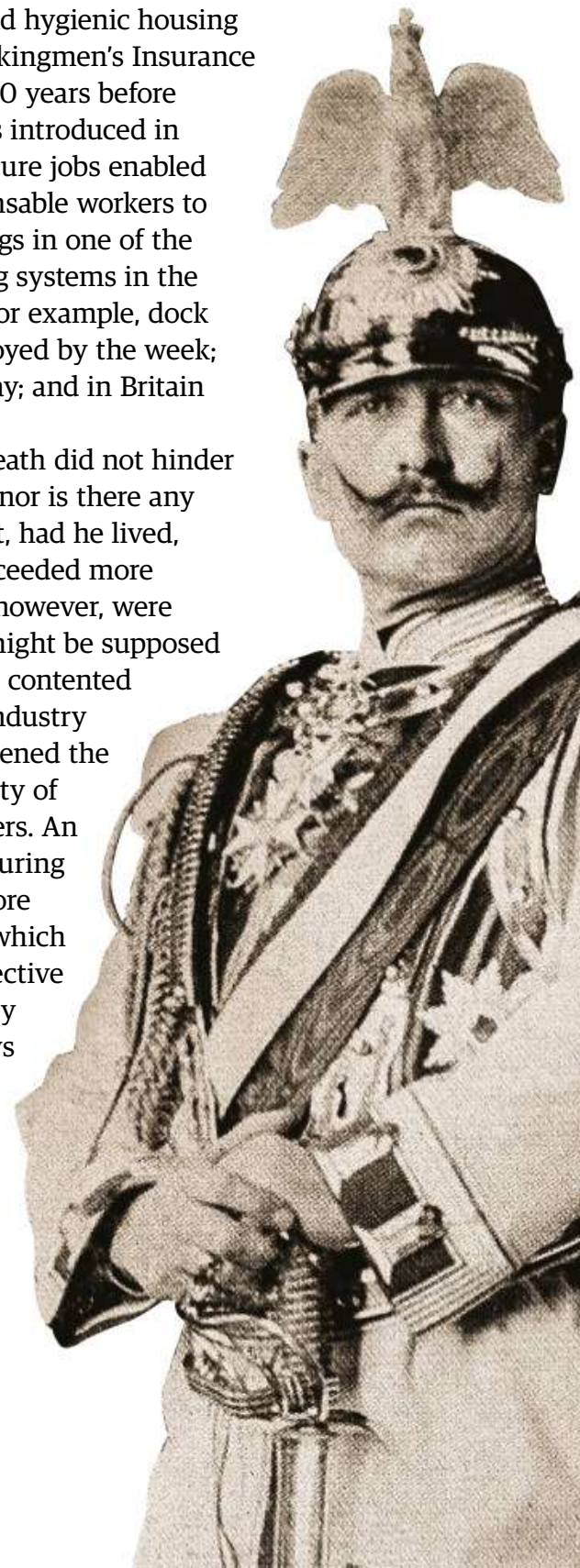
Would there have been time to establish his vision for Germany?

Had Frederick lived beyond the end of the century he might have been able to establish better relations with Britain due to his personal relationship with his brother-in-law, Edward VII, which could have lessened the growing tensions between the two nations. But it is highly unlikely that he would have been willing to sacrifice German prosperity to ease the commercial rivalry between them. It is equally unlikely that he would've yielded the provinces of Alsace-Lorraine to create greater harmony with France, and it would have required a dramatic change of heart to overcome his antipathy towards Russia. His focus would probably have been on domestic policy – guaranteeing press and religious freedom, fair elections, and introducing reforms to improve the lives of workers. As many of these reforms were already underway it is feasible that he would've been successful in developing a prosperous and united empire.

What could he have done better to ensure his legacy lived on through his heirs?

To a large extent, Frederick's legacy did live on through his heirs. Wilhelm II presided over further reforms to improve the lives of workers, and in many ways he was better placed than his father had been to achieve this. With Frederick's support, Wilhelm and his brother, Henry, had been taken each week to work in different factories to learn the manufacturing processes and familiarise themselves with 'ordinary' people. This gave Wilhelm an insight into workers' lives which he used to good effect when dealing with strikes and other industrial disputes. Contrary to popular opinion, based largely on wartime propaganda, Wilhelm II never had any desire for war, partly because he understood that the country could only prosper in peacetime, and partly because of what he had learned from his father. "Never," he wrote, "have I had warlike ambitions. In my youth my father had given me terrible descriptions of the battlefields of 1870 & 1871. I felt no inclination to bring such misery, on a colossally larger scale, on the German people and the whole of civilized mankind."

BELOW
Frederick's heir Wilhelm II pushed through further reforms in Germany



THE POSSIBILITY

1914

BLOODLINE NOT BLOODSHED

Frederick is reported to have told journalists: "I do not like war, gentlemen. If I should reign, I would never make it." If he had reigned for longer, perhaps it was his first-hand experience of war that may have seen him lead Germany in a more liberal, less offensive, stance. He would also perhaps have lived to see his brother-in-law Edward VII succeed Victoria. Their friendship may have helped an Anglo-German agreement very different from the jigsaw of alliances that were the major causes of war in 1914, and WWI may even have been avoided.

1888-?

NO MORE 'KAISER BILL'

With Frederick reigning for longer there may have been time for him to embed many more of his policies and plans. This may in turn have had a positive influence on his son and successor, Wilhelm II. His reputation was damaged by his alleged treatment of his parents during his father's fatal illness. Misconceived views and inaccurate perceptions sent by his mother to his grandmother, Queen Victoria, painted Wilhelm as cruel and vindictive, fuelling an image that manifested during WWI into propaganda and public perceptions of the bloodthirsty 'Kaiser Bill'.

1914-33

UNFULFILLED PROMISE

When public figures have their lives cut unexpectedly short the focus often falls on only good the things they had, or could have, achieved. Frederick became known for his stoicism in the face of an untimely death. Subsequent eulogies, particularly in Britain, turned him into a mythical hero who would have prevented war. But having fought in three wars, was he really anti-war? If potentially preventing WWI was not enough, for some the stability of his influence over monarchy and state may even have prevented the Weimar Republic and all its consequences, including World War II.

All images © Alamy

Through History

SYMBOLS THROUGH TIME

Instantly recognisable, symbols are an important part of daily life – from radioactivity to anarchy, male and female to Mercedes-Benz

Symbols are everywhere. Particularly useful in a capitalist society, they create instant brand recognition. If you happen to find yourself walking down your local high street and see a yellow letter M on a red background, you know what it means. Indeed, the McDonald's arches are probably one of the most instantly recognisable and iconic company logos. However, symbols have far more relevance than simply helping to sell hamburgers. Societally, symbols such as the International Symbol of Access can be seen everywhere. Politically, symbols can be used during protests or other large events to immediately transmit a message of what the demonstration is about and who's participating.

In *100 Symbols That Changed the World*, Colin Salter has collected 100 different symbols that in one way or another helped change the way we live. Alongside these he has provided detailed information on the origins of these symbols, as well as explanations as to what the iconography represents. Astonishingly just under 20 per cent of his selections are over 2,000 years old, and the majority are from the 20th and 21st century. In many cases this demonstrates the power of these symbols, some barely 100 years old but known and recognised the world over. A selection, both old and new, are presented here.

Main image: © Alamy
All images: © GettyImages

MERCEDES-BENZ

Despite now being instantly recognisable, this three-pointed symbol was not the company's first logo. A number of stories are connected to its origins; one states that the three prongs indicated the company's ambitions to have vehicles on land, on the sea and in the air.

TRISKELION

Something of a mysterious symbol, the original name, exact origins and even meaning of the triskelion are lost to time. The earliest discovered examples can be found in Malta and date from around 440 BCE.

ANARCHY

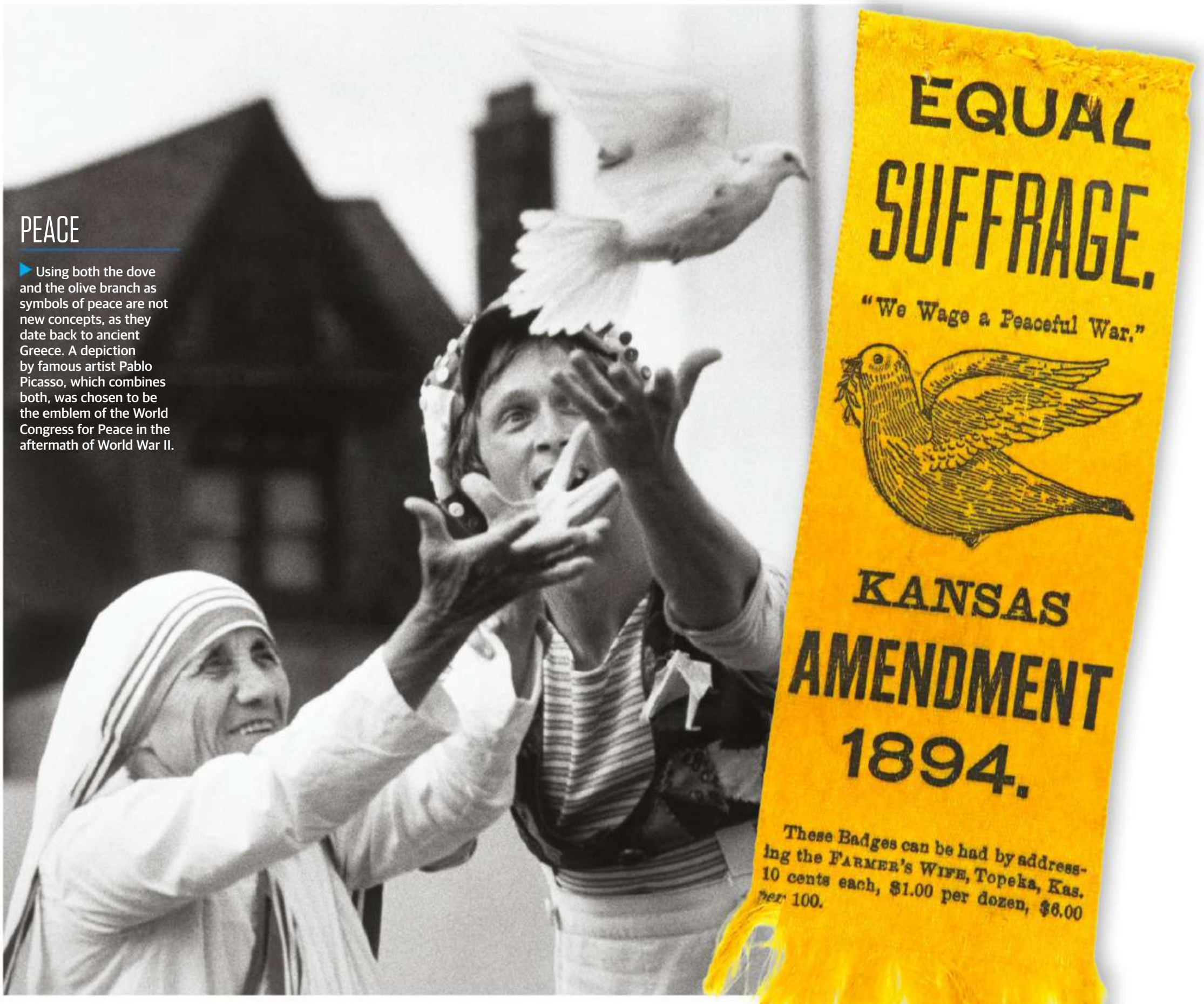
The exact origin of the anarchist symbol remains something of a mystery. Its first suspected use was by the Federal Council of Spain of the International Workers Association during the late 1800s. The 'A' is meant to represent 'anarchy', while the 'O' depicts order.

MALE AND FEMALE

Originally the male and female symbols represented both the ancient Roman god of war Mars and Venus the goddess of love. It was Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus who first used these symbols to identify male and female plants in 1751.

PEACE

Using both the dove and the olive branch as symbols of peace are not new concepts, as they date back to ancient Greece. A depiction by famous artist Pablo Picasso, which combines both, was chosen to be the emblem of the World Congress for Peace in the aftermath of World War II.


EQUAL
SUFFRAGE.
"We Wage a Peaceful War."
KANSAS
AMENDMENT
1894.
These Badges can be had by addressing the FARMER'S WIFE, Topeka, Kas. 10 cents each, $1.00 per dozen, $6.00 per 100.

NATIONAL TRUST

The iconic oak leaf symbol of the National Trust was designed by Joseph Armitage in 1936 in response to a competition held by the organisation. This was the second competition to be held, and only six designers were invited to enter due to the disappointing results of the first.

INTERNATIONAL SYMBOL OF ACCESS

Adopted by the World Congress in 1969, the International Symbol of Access was designed to work universally and end a potentially problematic situation where multiple symbols of differing design had begun to appear across a number of countries.

RADIOACTIVITY

This symbol began life in 1946 when it was drawn by members of a research group to represent the danger of radioactivity. The triangle shapes represent hazardous activity heading away from the small circle, which depicts an atom.

100 Symbols That Changed the World by Colin Salter is out on 13 October, published by Pavilion Books and priced at £22

REVIEWS

The books, TV shows and films causing a stir in the history world this month

© Vertical Entertainment

MEDIEVAL

A swashbuckling chase thriller about 15th-century hero Jan Žižka

Certificate: TBC **Director:** Petr Jákl **Cast:** Ben Foster, Matthew Goode, Michael Caine **Released:** 28 October

Jan Žižka is a national hero in the Czech Republic. His exploits in the 15th century, as a warlord and military commander fighting off the Holy Roman Empire, became the stuff of legend. It's said the furiously brave Žižka never lost a battle in all his days fighting, even when blinded. He is commemorated with a large statue on Viktov Hill in Prague and is a figure of repeated fascination in his homeland, with numerous films having been made by Czech directors in the past.

It was *Pulp Fiction*'s crime boss Marsellus Wallace who famously said, 'I'm gonna get medieval on your ass'. This iconic line from the 1994 Oscar-winner echoes in director Jákl's approach to staging combat and violent imagery. In the Czech Republic, this 2022 release, the most expensive production in the country's history, was released as Jan Žižka. However, given the lack of name recognition internationally, producers went with *Medieval* as the title; bland on the surface, but Jákl's committed and brutal vision makes it work.

What makes less sense is the initial plot. The script is essentially an imaginative interpretation of Žižka's early years as a mercenary-for-hire. We are entirely within the realm of myth over historical accuracy – the overriding mood and ambition is to stir patriotic blood. But it has to tie itself to a factual backdrop so that it isn't all complete fiction. The set-up is weirdly convoluted, too, bogged down in establishing chicanery and court intrigue, with too much dialogue delivered as wearisome exposition. It's all akin to traipsing through thick mud to get to firmer ground.

Medieval tells us, via on-screen introductory text and voiceover provided by Michael Caine, that King Wenceslaus IV (Karel Roden) is under attack. The ambitious Henry III of Rosenberg (Til Schweiger), a powerful nobleman, is biting at the heels of the weak king and uncrowned Holy Roman Emperor. Wenceslaus must also contend with rival Sigismund (Matthew Goode) and his own secret agenda to capture the crown and install himself as ruler. Caine's Lord Boreš, a fictitious character created for the film, has discovered these plots. He hires Žižka to kidnap Catherine (Sophie Lowe), niece to the King of France, an ally to Wenceslaus, out of Bohemia so she can inform him what's going on.

Since the story set-up is clumsy, its difficult to follow. Once Žižka – played with stoic toughness by American Ben Foster – and his band of fighters get moving, Jákl frees himself of burdensome politics and goes all in on an old-fashioned rip-roaring adventure, with Roland Møller's pursuing Torak making a fine villain. It's here the director's strengths for action cinema come to the fore.

Jákl might be more Ridley Not than Ridley Scott, but *Medieval* does find its feet and establish a keen momentum, the spectacle bolstered by some stunning locations, all captured in wintry platinum light, the camera greedily drinking up vertiginous mountains, ancient castles and endless green forests. ***MC***

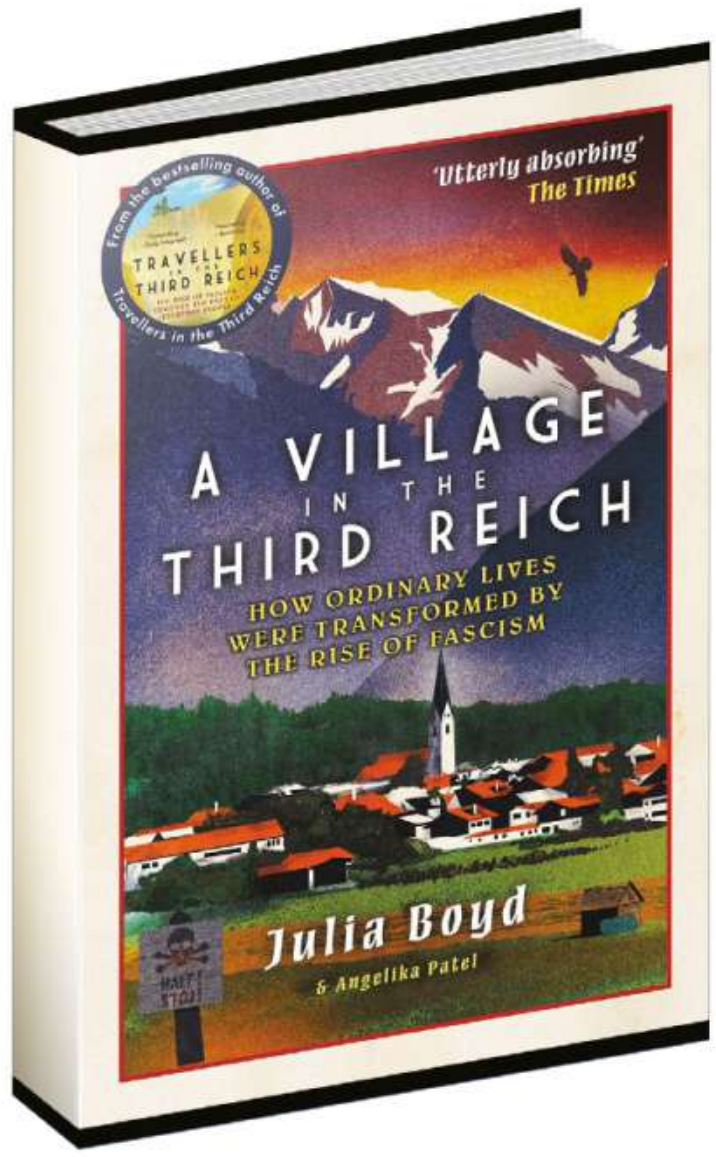
★★★☆☆

Reviews by
Martyn Conterio, Catherine Curzon, Callum McKelvie

A VILLAGE IN THE THIRD REICH

An eye-opening examination of life in the Third Reich

Author: Julia Boyd and Angelika Patel **Publisher:** Elliott & Thompson Limited
Price: £10.99 **Released:** 6 October


'Utterly absorbing'
The Times
from the bestselling author of
TRAVELLERS IN THE THIRD REICH
Travellers in the Third Reich
A VILLAGE IN THE THIRD REICH
HOW ORDINARY LIVES WERE TRANSFORMED BY THE RISE OF FASCISM
Julia Boyd
& Angelika Patel

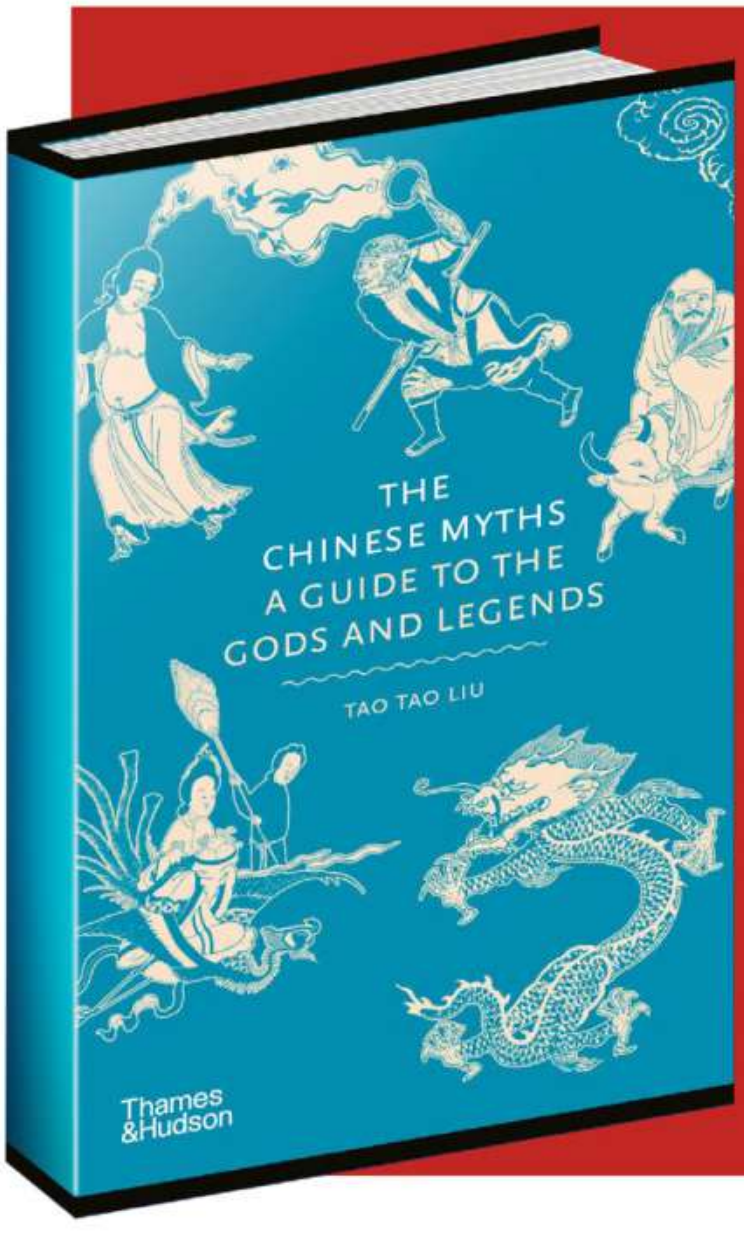
A Village in the Third Reich, by Julia Boyd and Angelika Patel, takes readers back in time to the village of Oberstdorf, high in the Bavarian Alps. It is from this seemingly distant place that we watch the rise of National Socialism and come to see the impact it had on even the most distant parts of Germany. From hopeful beginnings to the shattering final days of the war, this is a story of ordinary people in an extraordinary situation.

By not situating the book in the political heart of the Third Reich, Boyd and Patel bring a new perspective to a well-represented field. It introduces readers to a varied cast of characters and the events of the past that led Germany along the page to World War II, following its cast to the bitter end and beyond.

What stands out in these stories is the change that overcomes the village and its inhabitants as the war progresses, through the eyes of those who both support or oppose Nazism and the conflict. It's precisely because this is such a normal setting that it's easy to imagine yourself in this anything-but-normal situation and ask what we would have done faced with such circumstances.

A Village in the Third Reich draws heavily on archive material, including letters and memoirs, to examine life under the Third Reich. It's incredibly engaging and will no doubt appeal to an extremely wide range of readers, who will find it as compelling as it is evocative. ***CC***

★★★★☆



THE CHINESE MYTHS

A GUIDE TO THE GODS AND LEGENDS

An accessible and entertaining journey in mythology

Author: Tao Tao Liu **Publisher:** Thames & Hudson Ltd
Price: £14.99 **Released:** Out now

The Chinese Myths is an entertaining journey through centuries of Chinese myths and legends, from the ancient era to the present day. It seeks not only to illuminate traditions that are already familiar in the West, but also to introduce readers to the rich and complex tradition of Chinese mythology that's little known to those outside of China. Liu has created what is an advanced introduction to Chinese mythology, opening with a potted history of the subject before going on to more detailed examinations of everything from literary tradition to creation myths and onto gods, demigods and heroes. Along the way, readers are treated to an examination of the Buddhist and Daoist influence on Chinese mythology.

This well-illustrated book takes readers on a journey through an endlessly fascinating subject and introduces a rich cast of everything from immortals to monks, throwing in the odd mythical dragon along the way. It retells stories that are central to Chinese tradition, too, bringing them to a whole new audience.

The Chinese Myths is an absolutely fascinating introduction to what is a very complex subject. It will appeal to a huge range of readers, from those with an interest in Chinese history to those who simply prefer to delve into myth and legend. Accessible and entertaining, it's an excellent primer in the field. ***CC***

★★★★☆

Out now!

History of Halloween

Discover the hallowed history and frightening folklore of this fun festival and the ancient roots of our modern celebrations. From pagan gods to Christian saints, the changing roles of witches and some of history's most famous sorceresses, to why we carve pumpkins and go trick-or-treating, you'll find out the secrets behind spooky season.

Buy *History of Halloween* in shops or online at **magazinesdirect.com Price:** £15.99

HISTORY of WAR **RECOMMENDS...**

Out now!

The Disappearance of Josef Mengele

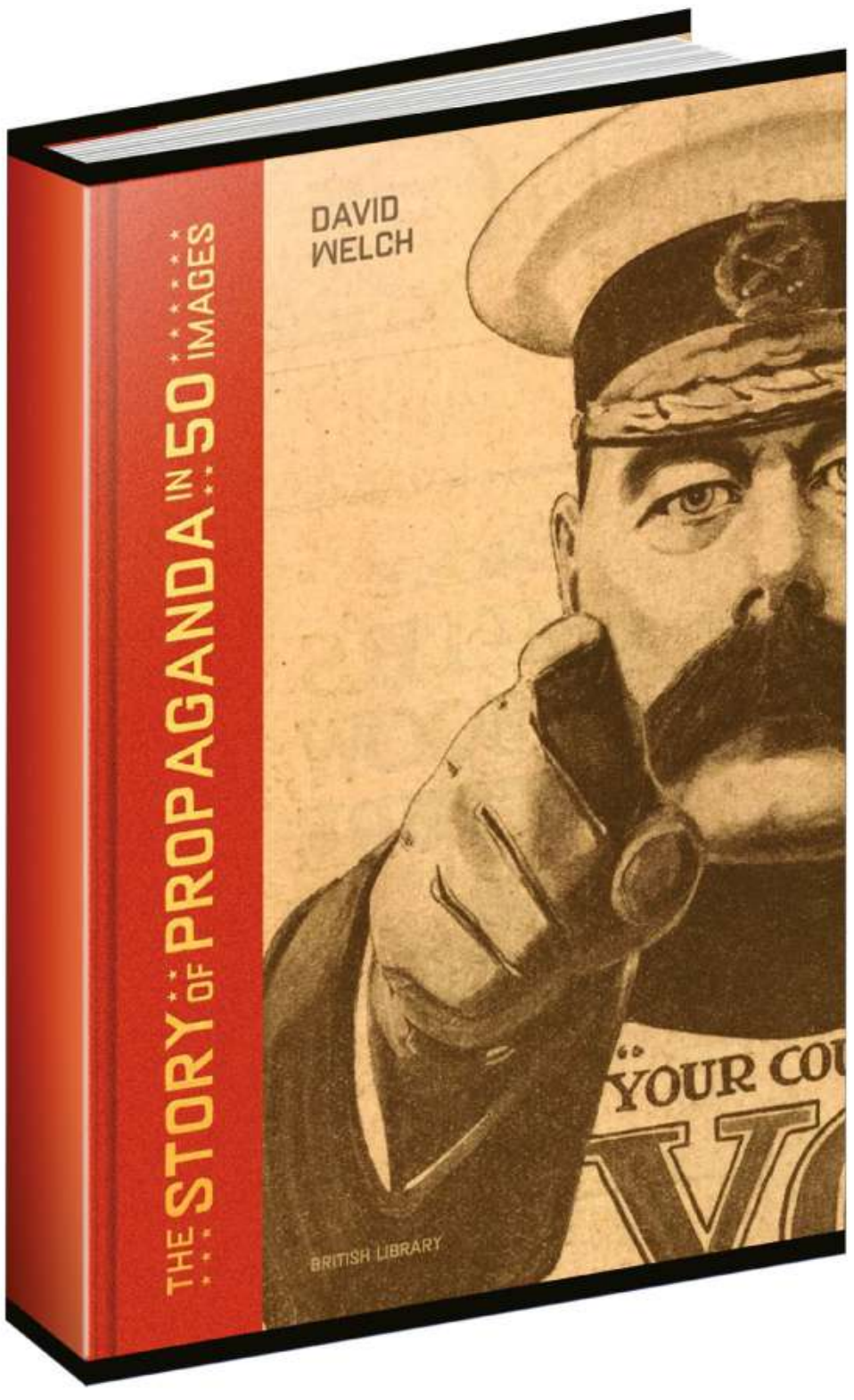
Author Olivier Guez **Price** £11.99 **Publisher** Verso

The Disappearance of Josef Mengele by Oliver Guez is a factual novel rather than a traditional history. However, that should not deter those serious about their history from reading it. Guez, a French journalist, has rigorously researched his subject, using the existing literature on Mengele as well as tracing the doctor's footsteps in Germany, Argentina and Brazil.

THE STORY OF PROPAGANDA IN 50 IMAGES

A fascinating collection of some of the most potent pieces of propaganda

Author: David Welch **Publisher:** British Library Publishing **Price:** £16.99 **Released:** Out now



Propaganda is the spreading of ideas, information or rumour for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause or a person, according to standard dictionary definitions. Of course, we all know some famous examples: the World War I era poster of Lord Kitchener pointing towards the viewer declaring 'Your country needs you!' and its many variations – one of which adorns the cover here. Yet now, in this world of social media and 'fake news', the concept of this simple image as an effective piece of propaganda can seem a little quaint. So how has propaganda shifted and developed over the years to reflect changing political trends and new technology? This is the question at the heart of David Welch's new book.

As the title suggests, this lavish hardback puts much of its focus on the images accompanying Welch's text. The majority of the images featured come from the 20th and 21st centuries. As Welch argues throughout his introduction, it was during the former that the birth of mass and later multimedia allowed for the greater dissemination of information.

Many of the featured images are instantly recognisable. Lord Kitchener, is, of course, present and correct. Others, however, such as the March of Dimes against Polio, are perhaps less familiar. For the most part the narrative is a fairly simplistic one, Welch delivering exactly what the title suggests. This is the story of the development of propaganda, and therefore any academics with an in-depth knowledge of this topic may find little new here.

As Welch barrels towards the conclusion he covers a number of relatively recent topics – 9/11, Brexit and Trumpism are all discussed. He ends on a sobering note, discussing the use of propaganda throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, illustrated with the three-word slogans used by Boris Johnson's government. This convoluted and ultimately failed attempt to control the message is an intriguing and contemporary note to end on. However, Welch chooses to follow this with an even more intriguing postscript in which he assesses the place of propaganda in our current social media-obsessed world. Though small, this final section is arguably one of the most fascinating parts of the book

However, although Welch's writing is extremely knowledgeable and considered, the images are the real draw here. For anyone with an interest in 20th and 21st century political and social history, this book presents a fascinating selection of primary sources. This rich collection of illustrations and photographic material is like lifting a lid on a treasure trove. ***CM***

★★★★☆

HISTORY VS HOLLYWOOD

Fact versus fiction on the silver screen

LOVING

Director: Jeff Nichols **Starring:** Joel Edgerton, Ruth Negga, Michael Shannon **Country:** USA **Year:** 2016

An intimate retelling of an important fight for marriage equality in America

VERDICT: Only veers from the facts in limited ways and still delivers

01 Mildred (Negga) and Richard (Edgerton) get married in Washington DC as interracial marriage was illegal in their home state of Virginia (and 23 other states) in 1958. They believed only the ceremony was prohibited in the state, not the marriage itself.

02 The film depicts the real events of the police breaking into the Loving's home at 2am and arresting them for 'cohabiting as man and wife, against the peace and dignity of the Commonwealth'. They are told they must leave the state for 25 years or face one year in prison.

03 The Lovings sneak back into Virginia to see family on several occasions. On one occasion it is for Richard's mother, a midwife, to help in the birth of their son. In the film, the police show up to arrest the couple. In reality this incident took place at a family Easter gathering.

04 We see Mildred writing a letter seeking legal aid to fight Virginia's anti-miscegenation laws. The family story is that she wrote to attorney general RFK for help. In her letter to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) she says he advised her to contact them.

05 The ACLU takes the case, which ends up at the Supreme Court. As in the film, the Lovings do not attend but Richard asks to tell the justices he loves his wife. The case was found in their favour 9-0, stating anti-miscegenation laws were unconstitutional.

Main image: © Alamy
5x inset image source: Focus Features

Did you know?

Aish baladi transcended class barriers. It could be served in many different ways and was popular with pharaohs and labourers alike

AISH BALADI

ANCIENT WHOLEGRAIN FLATBREAD, EGYPT, C.3100 BCE – PRESENT

A flatbread made and eaten by the people of ancient Egypt, aish baladi was traditionally made from emmer wheat – a widely cultivated grain in the region. Though emmer wheat is less common now, the bread can still be made with other types of flour. Aish baladi was made in clay ovens and could be eaten at any time of the day. It was considered an important dish by the ancients, with 'aish' translating as 'life' and 'baladi' translating as 'authentic'. This bread is still popular in Egypt, and the method of making it has largely remained the same for centuries.

Ingredients

- 700g wholewheat flour
- 600ml water
- 1 tbsp active dry yeast
- 1 tbsp sea salt
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- Wheat bran

Main image: © Alamy
Inset image: © Getty Images

METHOD

01 Whisk together water and yeast in a large bowl until the mixture is frothy.
02 Add half of the flour and salt to the mixture and incorporate into the liquid using your hands.
03 Once a dough has formed, cover the bowl with cling film and leave to sit for 45 minutes to allow the dough to rise.
04 After the dough has risen, remove the cling film and add the vegetable oil and the rest of the flour.
05 Using your hands again, knead the dough until the oil and flour have combined.
06 Take the dough out of the bowl and place it on a surface dusted with flour to ensure the dough doesn't stick.
07 Knead the dough for at least 10 minutes until it has a stretchy consistency.
08 Grease the large bowl with vegetable oil and place the dough inside. Cover the bowl with cling film and leave to sit for at least 90 minutes.
09 Put a baking stone in the oven and preheat it to as high as your oven will go (between 250°C and 270°C).
10 After 90 minutes, take the dough out of the bowl and divide it into equal-sized pieces (between 15 and 20).
11 Flatten the pieces of the dough, sprinkle wheat bran over each piece and place them onto sheets of baking paper. Cover them with a tea towel and allow to rise for another 20 minutes.
12 After 20 minutes transfer the pieces onto the hot baking stone in turn and bake for 5-10 minutes until the bread is puffed up.
13 Allow to cool slightly before serving.

NEXT MONTH ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE IN ENGLAND ON SALE 3 NOVEMBER

WAR THUNDER

New?
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BECOME A PILOT YOURSELF!
WARTHUNDER.COM/FLY

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12
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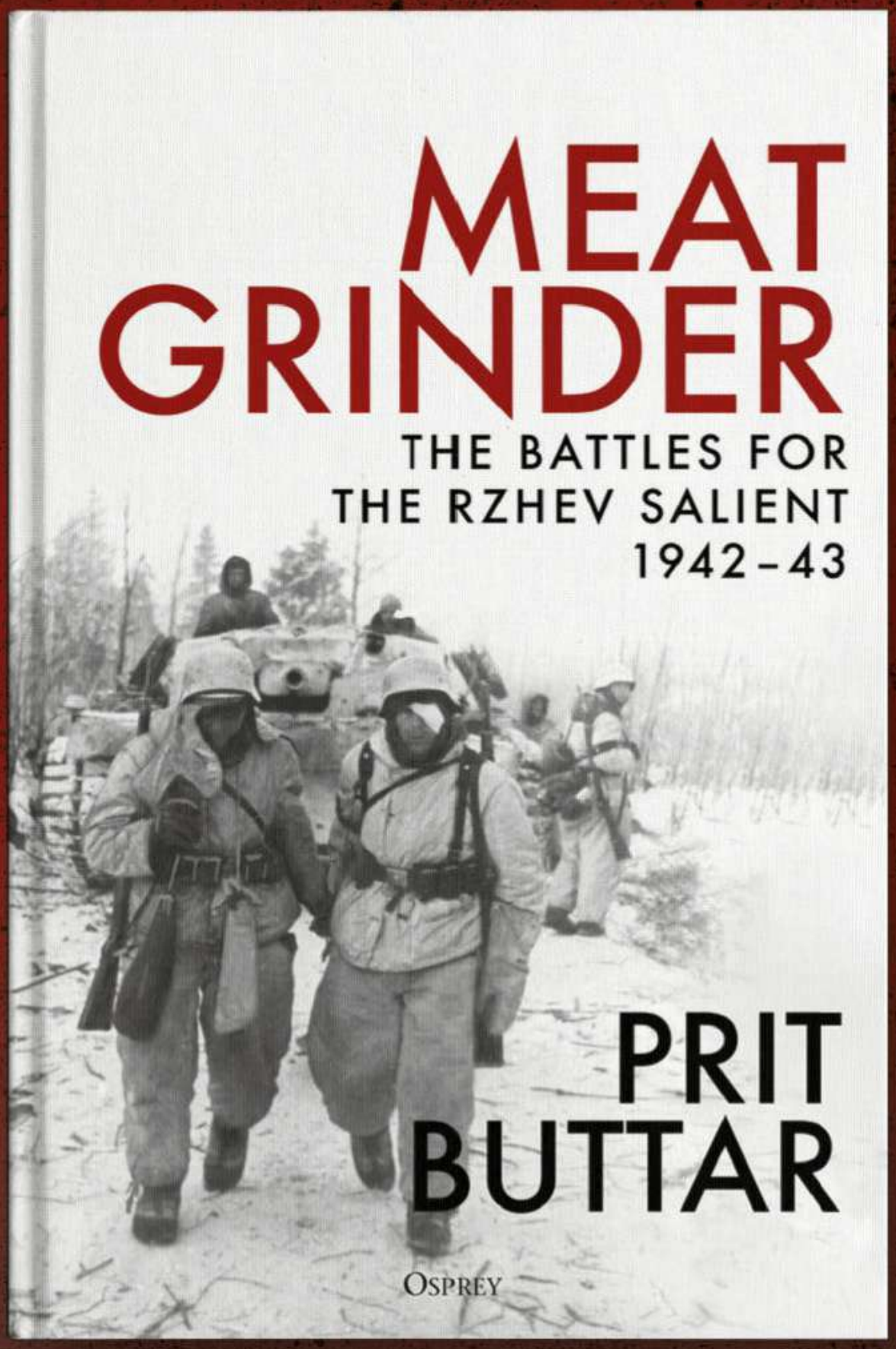
'This vivid and gripping account is of fundamental significance for our understanding of the Eastern Front … in a story that thrills and fascinates in equal measure, taking us back into the furnace of battle at its most intense.'

JEREMY BLACK, author of *Rethinking World War Two*



Written by acclaimed Eastern Front historian Prit Buttar, this is an engrossing history of the desperate battles for the Rzhev Salient, a forgotten story brought to life by the memoirs of German and Russian soldiers that recount the harrowing experiences of the fighting.

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